

VOLUME VIII, NUMBER 3, SUMMER 2008

CLAREMONT

REVIEW OF BOOKS

A Journal of Political Thought and Statesmanship

Mark Helprin:
*China's Growing
Threat*

Christopher
Levenick:
*Jacksonianism
Revisited*

Joseph
Tartakovsky:
*Homer Through
the Ages*

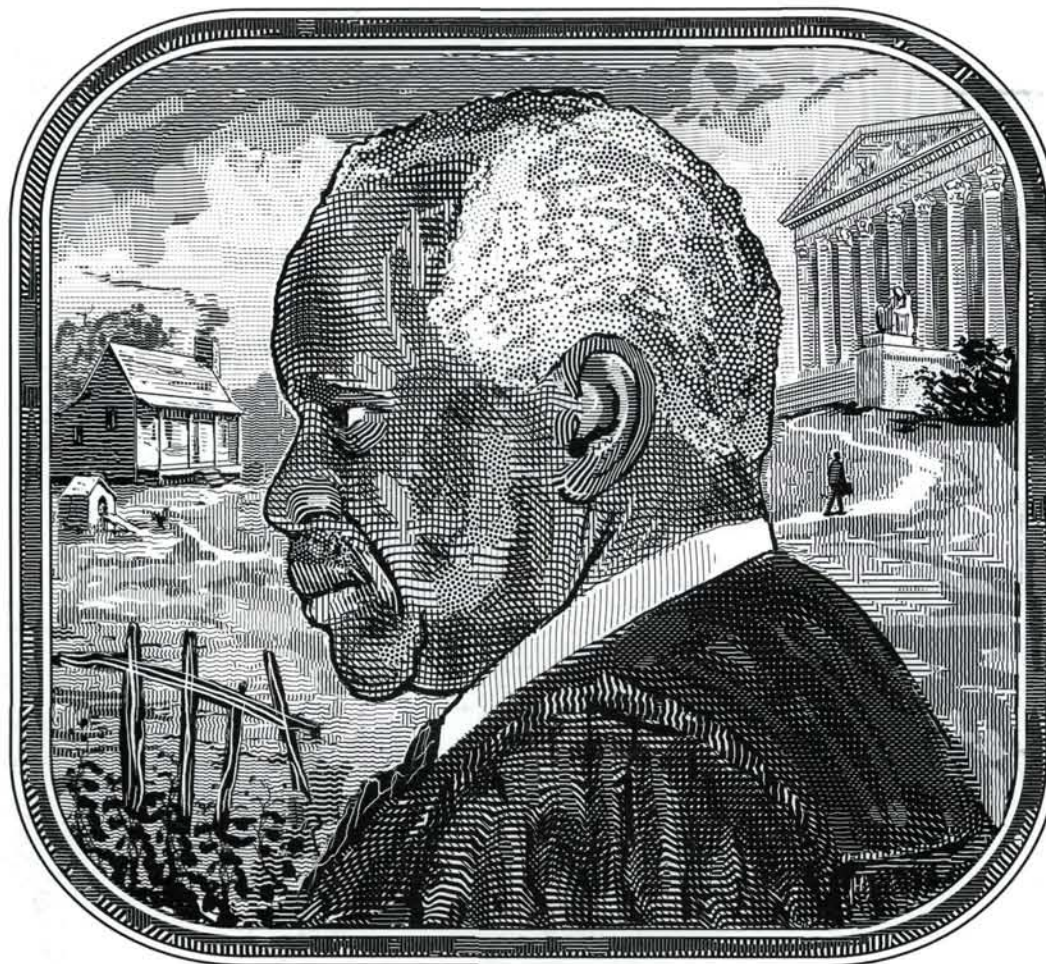
Eva Brann:
Dueling Pens

Algis Valiunas:
Edmund Wilson



The Honorable Clarence Thomas

by Wendy E. Long



Plus

William Voegeli:
Civil Rights and the Conservative Movement

Allen C. Guelzo:
Against the Lincoln Haters

Martha Bayles:
*HBO's
John Adams*

John J.
Pitney, Jr.:
*Conrad Black's
Nixon*

Lesley
Herrmann:
*Translating
War and Peace*

Paul A. Rahe:
*Great Souls
and Tyranny*

John Fonte:
*Global
Democracy?*

PRICE: \$6.95

IN CANADA: \$7.25

FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK

Charles R. Kesler: A Righteous Wind: page 3

CORRESPONDENCE: page 4

Science and Design; The Collapse of Civilization?

ESSAYS

William Voegeli: Civil Rights and the Conservative Movement: page 6
What the Right got wrong—and right.

Wendy E. Long: Bearing Witness: page 15
The life and character of Clarence Thomas.

Mark Helprin: Rich Country, Strong Arms: page 39
We ignore China's grand strategy at our peril.

REVIEWS OF BOOKS

John J. Pitney, Jr.: Nixon's the One: page 13
Richard M. Nixon: A Life in Full,
by Conrad Black.

Christopher Levenick: What Howe Hath Wrought: page 21
What Hath God Wrought: The Transformation of America, 1815-1848,
by Daniel Walker Howe.

Allen C. Guelzo: Washing Mud from Marble: page 23
Vindicating Lincoln: Defending the Politics of Our Greatest President,
by Thomas L. Krannawitter.

Joseph Tartakovsky: Man of a Thousand Faces: page 26
Homer's The Iliad and The Odyssey: A Biography,
by Alberto Manguel.

Lesley Herrmann: Puritans and Cavaliers: page 29
War and Peace, by Leo Tolstoy,
translated by Richard Pevear and Larissa Volokhonsky.

Eva Brann: Yin and Yang: page 32
Dualisms: The Agons of the Modern World,
by Ricardo J. Quinones.

Algis Valiunas: The Critic Who Sometimes Exists: page 34
Literary Essays and Reviews of the 1920s & 30s and
Literary Essays and Reviews of the 1930s & 40s, by Edmund Wilson.

Paul A. Rahe: The Great and the Good: page 37
The Case for Greatness: Honorable Ambition and its Critics,
by Robert Faulkner.

John Fonte: Beyond the Nation State: page 43
The Great Experiment: The Story of Ancient Empires, Modern States, and
the Quest for a Global Nation, by Strobe Talbott; and *Democracy Without*
Borders? Global Challenges to Liberal Democracy, by Marc F. Plattner.

Amity Shlaes: Will the Real Liberal Please Stand Up?: page 46
The Age of Abundance: How Prosperity Transformed America's Politics
and Culture, by Brink Lindsey.

James R. Stoner, Jr.: Our Robed Rulers: page 48
Political Foundations of Judicial Supremacy: The Presidency, the Supreme Court,
and Constitutional Leadership in U.S. History, by Keith E. Whittington.

George Thomas: First Things: page 50
Freedom for the Thought That We Hate: A Biography of the First Amendment,
by Anthony Lewis; and *Liberty of Conscience: In Defense of America's*
Tradition of Religious Equality, by Martha C. Nussbaum.

Thomas E. Schneider: City on a Hill: page 52
Christianity and American Democracy, by Hugh Heclo.

Ralph Ketcham: A Bright and Active Boy: page 54
The Political Philosophy of Benjamin Franklin, by Lorraine Smith Pangle.

BOOKS IN BRIEF: page 45

SHADOW PLAY

Martha Bayles: A Monument to Adams: page 55
HBO's John Adams is an brilliant portrait of a great American.

PARTHIAN SHOT

Mark Helprin: Make the Sudan an Offer It Can't Refuse: page 58



FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK

A RIGHTEOUS WIND

by Charles R. Kesler

THE LINCOLN-DOUGLAS DEBATES SET A BAD EXAMPLE FOR AMERICAN politics. Though undoubtedly the greatest forensic exchange in our history, they have led to a mania for debates, or so-called debates, among our presidential candidates. According to the *New York Times*, there have been 1,018 debates in this election cycle (47 during the presidential primaries alone)—so far.

And not one of them a debate in the classic sense. When Lincoln and Douglas went at it, each contest took three hours: one hour for the opening speaker (they alternated), an hour-and-a-half for his opponent, and then a half-hour's rebuttal. Even more amazing, to modern sensibilities, is that the entire discussion was devoted to a single subject—the expansion of slavery into the western territories. There were no newsmen preening for the cameras and lobbing self-serving questions. They were taking notes. It was called reporting, remember?

It would be painful to imagine two modern politicians locked in a three-hour marathon like that. If held to the single subject rule, each would probably sputter to a halt after 15 minutes (I'm being generous). Perhaps there are a few gaseous supermen who could fill three hours with sheer platitudes, weaving bloviated variations on the same insipid theme. But the scene is too awful to contemplate. Judging from reality television, though, it might draw high ratings.

You learn something from watching debates, of course, though the point of diminishing returns sets in well short of the 50th encounter, much less the thousandth. The irony is that Abraham Lincoln and Stephen Douglas were not running for president. They were pursuing a Senate seat from Illinois (though, thanks in part to their debates, each became a nominee for president two years later). Forensic skill is an asset for a senator, who debates with his colleagues on the Senate floor. The president never has to debate anyone.

The first presidential debate between the major party nominees occurred in 1960, between John F. Kennedy and Richard M. Nixon—two senators who had gotten carried away with the centennial celebration, in 1958, of the Lincoln-Douglas exchanges. (The sesquicentennial is this year, by the way.) Two senators are running for president this year, too, and various proposals for town hall meetings and, yes, L-D “debates” are already being floated.

These forums may prove important, but as a general rule you learn more from listening to and—especially—from *reading* the contenders’

major speeches than from tuning in to the debates. Presidents do have to give speeches, so there is a vocational relevance; and the format is conducive to extended argument and cultivated style, which modern press-conference-style debates manifestly are not.

JUDGING FROM THEIR SPEECHES SO FAR, JOHN MCCAIN AND BARACK Obama will make this one of the most interesting rhetorical seasons in a long while. (During the George H.W. Bush, Bill Clinton, and George W. Bush administrations, the gods of oratory did not smile upon our suffering land.) McCain’s speeches are hymns to patriotism—not to God and country, exactly, because he distinguishes the two rather differently than did, say, Ronald Reagan, who wanted to restore the public role of religion in this city on a hill. The Arizona senator seems content to keep revealed religion private, but wants to fill the public square with patriotic ritual. Thus he has brought back the old, neglected god of “bipartisan problem solving.” And though a type of compassionate conservative (he wouldn’t use the term, of course), he thrusts personal honor to the center of political life. That’s compassionate conservatism with a difference. Honor is a great theme of political life, and of political tragedy.

Obama’s speeches are something else again. Unlike most modern presidential orations, his eschew the relentless logic of leadership. He doesn’t call himself a leader very often, nor ask people, with the candidate’s usual gusto, to follow him (quickly now) into the future. His campaign planks are of course standard-issue liberalism, copied virtually wholesale from the unions’ wish books. But he doesn’t seem particularly interested in what he himself derides as “ten-point plans,” nor in the “grand speeches” needed to extol them and himself.

As observers have noted, his rallies are Happenings. He wants his campaign to be “the occasion, the vehicle, of your hopes, and your dreams.” He exhorts his supporters, “Let’s be the generation that ends poverty in America.... Let’s do this.” He calls them to be “men and women who are not content to settle for the world as it is, who have the courage to remake the world as it should be.”

Whew. At the 2004 Democratic National Convention, Obama said, “I believe that we have a righteous wind at our backs, and...we stand on the crossroads of history.” His speeches guarantee that there will be plenty of righteous wind blowing in 2008.

Claremont Review of Books, Volume VIII, Number 3, Summer 2008. (Printed in the United States on June 12, 2008.)

Published quarterly by the Claremont Institute for the Study of Statesmanship and Political Philosophy, 937 West Foothill Blvd., Suite E, Claremont, CA 91711. Telephone: (909) 621-6825. Fax: (909) 626-8724. Postmaster send address changes to Claremont Review of Books Address Change, 937 West Foothill Blvd., Suite E, Claremont, CA 91711.

Unsolicited manuscripts must be accompanied by a self-addressed, stamped envelope; or may be sent via email to: crbeditor@claremont.org.

Editor: Charles R. Kesler

Publisher: Brian T. Kennedy

Senior Editor: Christopher Flannery

Managing Editor: John B. Kienker

Associate Editors:

Kathleen Arnn, Joseph Tartakovsky

Editorial Assistants:

Patrick Collins, Daniel O'Toole

Art Director: Elliott Banfield

Publisher (1999-2001): Thomas B. Silver

Price: \$6.95 per copy; \$27.80 per one-year subscription; \$55.60 per two-year subscription; \$83.40 per three-year subscription. Add \$10 for all foreign subscriptions, including those originating in Canada and Latin America. To subscribe, call (909) 621-6825, or inquire via e-mail at: subscriptions@claremont.org.

Visit us online at: www.claremont.org.

Opinions expressed in signed articles do not necessarily represent the views of the editors, the Claremont Institute, or its board of directors. Send all letters to the editor to the above addresses.

All contents Copyright © 2008 the Claremont Institute, except where otherwise noted.

CORRESPONDENCE

SCIENCE AND DESIGN

I find much to agree with in Joseph M. Bessette's review of three books arguing for divine design in the universe ("Science and Faith," Spring 2008). It would be nice to have something more solid than a metaphysical waving of hands behind design intuitions. Still, Bessette could have asked more forcefully if current ideas of design work at all.

Consider Owen Gingerich's book, *God's Universe*. Bessette notes how Gingerich wants both to point out signs of design and to say design is a matter beyond science. But there are deeper problems. For a historian of science, Gingerich shows little awareness of the significance of the history of design arguments. Today's pro-design, cosmological fine-tuning enthusiasts are not the first to try to find cosmic improbabilities; but none of these efforts has ever met with lasting success. Among physicists today, calling fine-tuning a sign of design is not a serious option. In a physical context, design does no explanatory work: it makes no new predictions and highlights no new patterns.

Francis Collins's *The Language of God* is also unimpressive. Collins rejects explicit design in biology, the area where he undoubtedly has standing, but argues for design in cosmology. Unfortunately, Collins is out of his depth in his naïve discussions of physical cosmology. He is not alone in this; it may be interesting to ask why some devout scientists reject claims for design in their own areas of expertise but endorse it in areas they know little about.

Then there is the Intelligent Design movement, including figures such as Michael Behe, author of *The Edge of Evolution*. I agree that there is something commendable in an unevasive argument for design that ignores arbitrary pronouncements about what science can and cannot do. But does the argument succeed? Expert judgment on Behe's claims, in both his recent book and earlier work, has been resoundingly

negative. And this is not because I.D. arguments have failed to get a scientific hearing. Many scientists have found I.D. intriguing, at least as a mistake that is worth criticizing in depth. I am co-editor of *Why Intelligent Design Fails*, a collection of detailed scientific criticisms of Behe and William Dembski. Other scientists have also engaged with I.D. as a scientific proposition and explained why it is mistaken. Intelligent Design proponents sidestep such work and concentrate on their philosophical and theological critics. But in doing so, they reinforce the impression within mainstream science that I.D. is primarily an ideological enterprise.

Perhaps like Bessette, if forced I would prefer the I.D. of Behe and Dembski to the I.D.-lite of Gingerich and Collins. At least the former attempts to put some real content into design intuitions. But this also means we should demand something considerably more substantial from its I.D. proponents. All indications so far are that nothing is forthcoming.

Taner Edis

Truman State University
Kirksville, MO

In his review, Joseph M. Bessette does not mention the many critical reviews of the same books that have appeared elsewhere, both in print and online.

For example, Bessette has an overall positive opinion of Michael Behe's work, which has been severely criticized and almost unanimously rejected by the scientific community. *The Edge of Evolution* has been skewered by biologists, mathematicians, and philosophers of science (including Sean Carroll, Jerry Coyne, Richard Dawkins, Mark Chu-Carroll, Nick Matzke, S.A. Smith, Ian Musgrave, and others).

Behe is a prominent Fellow of the Discovery Institute's Center for Science and Culture, which is the hub of the Intelligent Design movement, but in many respects his views are at odds with the arti-

cles of faith of many I.D. advocates. He accepts many tenets of the Darwinian evolution theory, including common descent, but his main idea is that although the Darwinian process may be real, it has certain limitations, and those limitations can be overcome, in his opinion, only by the interference of an undefined designer (who, on closer inspection, turns out to be the God of the Bible). For example, Behe concludes that certain evolutionary steps could happen only if more than one lucky mutation occurred simultaneously. Such events, he calculates, if assumed to have happened spontaneously, have such a minuscule probability that they should be considered practically impossible, unless a "Designer" deliberately and miraculously caused them to happen.

Behe's math, however, has been shown to be faulty. He applies probabilistic reasoning in an invalid way. Likewise, his treatment of such concepts as fitness landscape, fitness function, and the like, show his misunderstanding of these elements of optimization theory (in Behe's interpretation, fitness landscape is imagined as nearly one-dimensional as well as static, while the real fitness landscape in the biosphere is multi-dimensional and dynamic).

Likewise his discussion of viruses has been shown to be fraught with elementary errors. After graduate student S.A. Smith, who conducts research on the HIV viruses, pointed out erroneous statements in Behe's book, the author was forced grudgingly to admit his error. (Perhaps a unique event among I.D. advocates, who usually pretend not to notice comments pointing to their errors).

Behe's book contains many other weaknesses. From Bessette's review, readers would not learn at all about any of the problems that in fact make the book a failure.

Mark Perakh

Cal State University, Fullerton
Fullerton, CA

Joseph M. Bessette maintains that "The testing of Darwinism's claims is, of course, a large part of the Intelligent Design enterprise and the whole point of *The Edge of Evolution*." That a religious doctrine, which so-called "Intelligent Design" most assuredly is, should be called upon to test a scientific theory is surprising. That a scientific theory is to be tested by a doctrine of faith that is neither testable nor falsifiable, is ludicrous.

Ken Willis
Denver, CO

Joseph M. Bessette replies:

Taner Edis, a physicist, and Mark Perakh, a mathematician and physicist, would have us believe that the debate on intelligent design is over, but many others are not so sure. Edis and Perakh, themselves, write extensively against Intelligent Design and have made useful contributions to the debate in books and numerous articles.

Although Edis appreciates that I have reservations about Francis Collins's *The Language of God* and Owen Gingerich's *God's Universe*, he is too quick to dismiss the teleological, or theological, implications of "cosmological fine tuning," as discussed by both authors. Numerous leading astronomers, cosmologists, physicists, philosophers, and theologians—theists and non-theists alike—have grappled with the meaning of the extraordinary fact that so many properties of nature are just what they need to be to have a universe that can support intelligent life. Indeed, this is one reason why many scientists, reluctant to conclude that the universe was intentionally designed just this way, are attracted to the "multiple universe" hypothesis. They speculate that universes exist with all possible physical constants and properties of matter and we happen to live in the one that works. When Edis says that inferring design from fine-tuning "does no

explanatory work," he apparently means that it will not affect the work of "physicists today." But who thought it would? Perhaps it will do a different kind of "explanatory work": explaining, or at least helping to explain, why the universe is as it is and whether it was designed with man in mind. Isn't this enough "explanatory work" for one hypothesis?

Mark Perakh's letter draws on a very lengthy critique of my review that appeared on his website "Talk Reason," a critique so long and detailed that he had two other scientists review the initial draft (see www.talkreason.org/articles/Bessette.cfm). Oddly, the website review begins with a nine-paragraph denunciation of "Bessette's argument from authority" (emphasis in the original) in defense of faith. To read Perakh, you would think I had argued that because Kepler believed in God, therefore God exists. Of course, I made no such argument. I made two empirical observations relevant to the conclusion of some that "science tilts the scales toward atheism": first, that "many (most?) of the giants who founded modern science were themselves deeply religious"; and, second, that two-fifths of working scientists in the United States "profess belief in a personal God who communicates with humankind and answers prayers." While I happily concede that these facts don't demonstrate that God exists, they are surely relevant to the question whether science "tilts the scales toward atheism."

In this respect it would be interesting to know what Perakh thinks about the connection between science and theism in Collins' and Gingerich's books. He seems to have missed the whole point of the two books. While it is true that both Collins and Gingerich oppose Intelligent Design of the William Dembski and Michael Behe type, both believe that the universe *was* intelligently designed and that certain scientific findings, such as the Big Bang (both) and the "digital elegance of DNA" (Collins), provide supporting evidence. What does Perakh think Collins meant by his sub-

title: *A Scientist Presents Evidence for Belief*?

Perakh argues that the fact that others have "skewed" Behe's *The Edge of Evolution* proves "the book a failure." Apparently, even a graduate student was able to find "elementary errors," forcing the author "grudgingly to admit his error." The story, though, as might be expected, is a bit more complex. The reader can follow the entire matter on Behe's Amazon blog where he has set out an extensive response to the graduate student's critique and also to the embrace of it by a more senior scientist.

One of the great challenges in following the debate over intelligent design is discerning the legitimate scientific questions and evidence amidst all the rhetoric and polemic. For example, in responding to Behe's response, the graduate student cited by Perakh revealed in her "opportunity to expose the fact you are a charlatan to the entire planet...[and] to highlight the arrogance of Creationists like yourself." Behe was "basically acting like a common gutter Creationist." "So what's your deal?" she asks. "Is it just for the money? You've got a litter of kids, and I admit I would find the \$20K you get for selling out rather tempting in today's funding climate." Is it unreasonable to think that such hostility might color this researcher's critique of intelligent design?

Ken Willis's brief letter describes Behe's argument in *The Edge of Evolution* as "a religious doctrine" and a "doctrine of faith" that is irrelevant to Darwinism's claims. But, as Behe shows at the end of his book, his science leads to some unsettling conclusions about the designer: "Here's something to ponder long and hard: Malaria was intentionally designed. ...What sort of designer is that? What sort of 'fine-tuning' leads to untold human misery? ...Maybe the designer isn't all that beneficent or omnipotent. Science can't answer questions like that." One wonders what "doctrine of faith" Willis has in mind that would produce such a conclusion. Critics of Intelligent Design should, as many do, confront the science.

THE COLLAPSE OF CIVILIZATION?

A strange thing happened when I read Midge Decter's review of my book, *The Death of the Grown-Up: How America's Arrested Development Is Bringing Down Western Civilization* ("Growing Up American," Winter 2007/08). I didn't recognize the book she described as my own.

Why? Decter has reviewed a book which posits that lax parents and their spoiled children are, as the subtitle declares, "bringing down Western civilization." For supporting evidence, she says the author—me, supposedly—looks to, well, the laxity of parents and the spoiledness of children.

Such a summation of *The Death of the Grown-Up* is equal parts baffling and peculiar. It's not that my book doesn't examine changes in the family (and the culture) that were first in force in the 1950s (and not the 1960s, as the review implies), but only two chapters out of the book's nine are specific to parents and children. The rest explore the impact of the abdication of adult authority and the coronation of youth on our larger culture, way beyond the family circle that, for reasons I cannot fathom, regrettably constricts this review.

Eroding manners and mores, the rise of multiculturalism and political correctness, the ensuing loss of Western identity and virtues, the bifurcation of mainstream and military culture: all of these developments of the latter half of the 20th century I link to the death of the grown-up.

It is in the final third of the book that I lay out its most controversial claims: that in our culturally infantilized state, we inhabit a world of pretend when it comes to Islam. There is something—dare I say childish?—in our failure to discuss frankly the politically incorrect truths about Islam's supremacist nature.

Whether I was successful in my argument, readers of Ms. Decter's review will never know. Of course, they are not alone. It is a perplexing fact that most reviewers of *The*

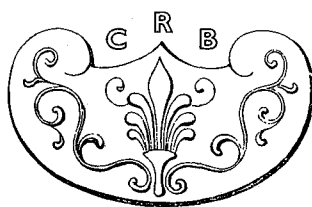
Death of the Grown-Up have withheld any and all comment on the final three chapters of the book dealing with the "war on terror," democracy, and Islam. At this point, I can only hope readers pick up the book and decide for themselves.

Diana West
Washington, D.C.

Midge Decter replies:

Diana West may have invented a new strategy for responding to a review that an author is displeased by: namely, review one's book oneself. And since readers—not to mention this one—would find it not only pointless but tiresome to have to go through what would be a re-review of West's book, I will confine myself to advising her and her readers to heed the advice of D.H. Lawrence: "Trust not the teller, trust the tale." Since "the abdication of adult authority and the coronation of youth" is a condition of American society with which those of us older than she have been familiar for probably upwards of half a century, and since at the same time other rather complicated things have been going on both in and at the hands of American culture and society—movements, powerful counter-movements (including, may one say, with respect to Islam), wars, futile compromises, political bravery, political cowardice, lying, truth-telling, and now and then a coming through handsomely—to proclaim that America's "arrested development" is doing no less than "bringing down Western civilization" becomes a species of disaster-mongering. What she herself adduces as evidence not only does not support but is positively given the lie by the behavior of a comforting number of West's fellow Americans every day.

If Western civilization is to be brought down, it will not be at the hands of the United States and its admittedly less-than wonderful cultural condition. And Miss West, who is, as I remarked, a gifted and sprightly writer, would do well to cool her temper and provide her readers with accounts of things nearer at hand.



CIVIL RIGHTS AND THE CONSERVATIVE MOVEMENT

Essay by William Voegeli

ON APRIL 4, 2008, MOURNERS GATHERED at St. Patrick's Cathedral in New York to memorialize William F. Buckley, Jr., who had died five weeks earlier. That same Friday, mourners one thousand miles away gathered at the Lorraine Motel in Memphis to memorialize Martin Luther King, Jr., who had been murdered there exactly 40 years before.

The coincidence resonates. Drawing on exceptional rhetorical talents without ever being elected to public office, each man transformed the terrain where mere politicians clash. Buckley and King, born less than four years apart, both attained national prominence while still in their 20s. Buckley founded *National Review* in 1955; its first issue appeared two weeks before Rosa Parks set in motion the Montgomery bus boycott, which turned Dr. King into the nation's preeminent black leader. Buckley and King went on to forge the conservative and civil rights movements, respectively, each of which reshaped American politics in the second half of the 20th century.

These two political movements were not, as conceived, antagonists. In its formative years the conservative movement was preoccupied with defeating international Communism and reversing the New Deal, while the civil rights movement existed to end Jim Crow. Neither objective required opposing, or even noticing, the other. The elaboration of each movement's premises, however, quickly turned them into adversaries.

On the questions where the movements confronted each other directly the simplest judgment is that King was right and Buckley was wrong. Although Buckley's personal generosity and talent for friendship resulted in warm tributes from writers on the Left, such as John Judis and James Galbraith, the first item always cited to disparage his legacy was Buckley's record during the decade between the Montgomery bus boycott and passage of the Voting Rights Act of 1965. "Buckley was not himself a bigot," Tim Noah wrote in *Slate* the day Buckley died, "but he was at best blind and at worst indifferent to the bigotry all around him, and there can be no question that he stood in the way of racial progress." In 2006 Noah's *Slate* colleague, Daniel Gross, made the same point more heatedly:

At a time when a portion of the U.S. maintained a system of racial apartheid, Buckley and his magazine, time and time again, sided with the white supremacists. And in the decades since, I haven't seen any evidence that he and his many acolytes are sorry, or ashamed—or that they've ever engaged in anything like an honest reckoning with their intellectual complicity in segregation.

These blunt judgments are similar to the one delivered from within conservative ranks by Jonah Goldberg in 2002:

Conservatives should feel some embarrassment and shame that we are outraged at instances of racism now that it is easy to be. Conservatives...were often at best MIA on the issue of civil rights in the 1960s. Liberals were on the right side of history on the issue of race. And conservatives should probably admit that more often.

All of Buckley's writings are now available at Hillsdale College's website (www.hillsdale.edu/buckley). Through them runs the line Goldberg gently suggests, the one separating the ways conservatives *avoided* the campaign to end America's caste system, from the ways they *impeded* that campaign.

Government and Race

VIEWED FROM 2008, THE MOVEMENT Buckley led was detached from the civil rights struggle because conservatives, despite frequent and apparently sincere expressions of hope for racial harmony, rarely viewed the fight against pervasive, entrenched, and episodically brutal racial discrimination as a question of great moral urgency. Conservatives were personally opposed to Jim Crow as liberals of a later generation insisted they were personally opposed to abortion. Making the opposition personal was a way to keep the

states, in the case of abortion, or the nation, when it came to segregation, from making it governmental.

Buckley did not mention race in his famous publisher's statement in the inaugural issue of *National Review*. The magazine was going to stand athwart history and yell Stop. But it would be yelling at Communists, "jubilant" in the belief they had an "inside track to History," and at liberals "who run this country" and who, having embraced relativism, rejected "fixed postulates...clearly enunciated in the enabling documents of our Republic" in favor of "radical social experimentation."

It was within this framework that *National Review* conservatism addressed the issues raised by the civil rights movement. Integration and black progress were welcomed when they were the result of private actions like the boycotts of segregated buses or lunch counters, which Buckley judged "wholly defensible" and "wholly commendable." He also praised a forerunner to the socially responsible mutual fund, an investment venture started in 1965 to raise capital for racially integrated housing developments, calling it "a project divorced from government that is directed at *doing* something about a concrete situation," one that "depends for its success on the spontaneous support of individual people."

The corollary was that conservatism opposed the civil rights agenda when it called for or depended on Big Government. "We frown on any effort of the Negroes to attain social equality by bending the instrument of the state to their purposes," Buckley wrote in 1960.

But we applaud the efforts to define their rights by the lawful and non-violent use of social and economic sanctions which they choose freely to exert, and to which those against whom they are exerted are free to respond, or not, depending on what is in balance. That way is legitimate, organic progress.

This opposition to Big Government engendered conservative opposition to every milestone achievement of the civil rights movement. *National Review* denounced *Brown v. Board of Education* (1954), calling it "an act of judicial usurpation," one that ran "patently counter to the intent of the Constitution" and was "shoddy and illegal in analysis, and invalid as sociology." It opposed the 1964 Civil Rights Act and 1965 Voting Rights Act on similar grounds. A Buckley column dismissed the former as

a federal law, artificially deduced from the Commerce Clause of the Constitution or from the 14th Amendment, whose marginal effect will be to instruct small mer-

chants in the Deep South on how they may conduct their business.

Senator Barry Goldwater used similar reasoning to justify voting against the bill on the eve of his general election contest with Lyndon Johnson. Saying he could find "no constitutional basis for the exercise of Federal regulatory authority" over private employment or public accommodations, Goldwater called the law "a grave threat" to a "constitutional republic in which fifty sovereign states have reserved to themselves and to the people those powers not specifically granted to the central or Federal government." Goldwater arrived at this conclusion, according to Rick Perlstein's book on the 1964 campaign, *Before the Storm: Barry Goldwater and the Unmaking of the American Consensus* (2001), after receiving advice from two young legal advisors, William Rehnquist and Robert Bork.

Liberals and Conservatives

IT WOULD BE UNFAIR TO LEAVE THE IMPRESSION that conservatism was uniquely preoccupied with its own agenda as the civil rights cause was gaining salience. Liberals, too, had other fish to fry, such as consolidating and expanding the New Deal, prosecuting the containment doctrine against the Soviet Union, and forestalling any second act to McCarthyism. Adlai Stevenson won two Democratic presidential nominations, and numberless admirers among liberals, despite: selecting an Alabama segregationist, John Sparkman, to be his running mate in 1952; opposing (more forcefully than did President Eisenhower) any federal role in integrating Southern schools in 1956; and denouncing "the reckless assertions that the South is a prison, in which half the people are prisoners and the other half are wardens."

One difference between Eisenhower-era liberals and conservatives is that the former kept their distance from the civil rights movement for practical reasons while the latter did so for principled ones. Democrats would imperil their chances for a majority in the Electoral College and Congress without the Solid South, a reality that constrained both FDR and JFK. Legend has Lyndon Johnson turning to an aide after signing the Civil Rights Act and saying that the Democrats had just lost the South for a generation. Johnson was the least politically naïve man in America, of course; he looked forward to an election victory and beyond it to forging a Great Society coalition that would secure Democratic victories without the New Deal coalition's reliance on the South. Nevertheless, none of this was assured, and liberals have been nearly as reluctant as conservatives to praise the big political risk Johnson took for the sake of a deep moral conviction.

Having embraced the destruction of Jim Crow and the broader cause of promoting black progress, liberals' belief in the federal government's plenary power facilitated their support for any measure that would, or might, promote civil rights. Conservatives opposed to racial discrimination, however, had few obvious ways to act on that belief without abandoning their long, twilight struggle to re-confine the federal government within its historically defined riverbanks after the New Deal had demolished all the levees. Perlstein portrays Goldwater, a member of the NAACP who had fought against segregation in the Phoenix public schools while on the city council, as anguished by the choice between a moral and a constitutional imperative confronting him in the vote on the civil rights bill.

William Buckley's writings, by contrast, leave the impression that he found the choice between civil rights and the Constitution of limited, enumerated powers regrettable but not especially difficult. (It's worth noting that Buckley's father, born in 1881, grew up in Texas, while his mother was born in 1895 and raised in New Orleans. The "cultural coordinates of our household were Southern," Buckley wrote in his mother's obituary.) If the conservative understanding of constitutional government meant that segregation would persist for decades...then segregation would persist. Conservatives "know that some problems are insoluble," Buckley wrote in 1961. "Should we resort to convulsive measures that do violence to the traditions of our system in order to remove the forms of segregation in the South?" he asked. "I say no." Instead, Buckley expressed the hope

that when Negroes have finally realized their long dream of attaining to the status of the white man, the white man will still be free; and that depends, in part, on the moderation of those whose inclination it is to build a superstate that will give them Instant Integration.

Forty years later Buckley and Michael Kinsley shared a series of email exchanges with the readers of *Slate*. The discussion turned to the 1964 Civil Rights Act, about which Kinsley offered the opinion "that using the power of the government to tell people whom they must do business with really is a major imposition on private freedom.... There's no question the imposition is justified—and has been hugely successful—in rectifying the historical injustice to African-Americans." Buckley, in a formulation John Kerry would have done well not to borrow, responded: "I'd have voted against the bill, but if it were out there today, I'd vote for it, precisely for the reason you gave."

In other words, convulsive measures to overturn segregation *were* necessary. But then again perhaps not, since Buckley immediately goes on to tell Kinsley, "I'd vote with trepidation, however, for the obvious reason that successful results cannot necessarily legitimize the means by which they were brought about." The desegregation omelet was worth making, but the limited government eggs might or might not have been worth breaking.

Buckley had his reasons, then, for opposing the civil rights movement. Even though he ultimately came to regard that movement's initial and unassailable goal—the end of second-class citizenship in both its petty and vicious aspects—as the more compelling imperative, it was always a close call. Buckley never retracted his limited-government arguments against the civil rights agenda, nor did he relinquish the hope that civil rights could be advanced in ways that impinged only slightly on the conservative project of restoring the founders' republic.

Worse than Missing in Action

THE CONSTITUTIONAL PRINCIPLES AT THE heart of this project were—*are*—ones that liberals find laughable, fantastic, and bizarre. Because they cannot take them seriously they reject the possibility that conservatives do. Thus, liberals dismiss "states' rights" as nothing more than a code word for racism. There is no point in conservatives even asking what the code word for states' rights is, because liberals cannot imagine anyone believes this to be a legitimate political concern.

From this viewpoint, conservatism's "reasons" for opposing civil rights were, in fact and from the beginning, excuses for oppressing blacks. Buckley's least judicious writings make it difficult to wave away that allegation. These are moments in conservatism's history where it was, in Goldberg's sense, worse than merely missing in action in the battle for racial equity.

Exhibit A, quoted triumphantly by Paul Krugman in his new book *The Conscience of a Liberal*, was a 1957 *National Review* editorial Buckley wrote, "Why the South Must Prevail." In it, Buckley said that the "central question" is neither "parliamentary" nor one "that is answered by merely consulting a catalogue of the rights of American citizens, born Equal." Rather, it is "whether the White community in the South is entitled to take such measures as are necessary to prevail, politically and culturally, in areas in which it does not predominate numerically?"

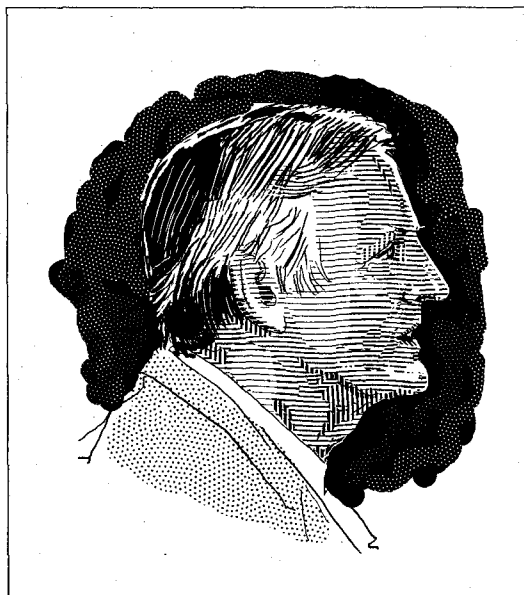
And? "The sobering answer is Yes—the White community is so entitled because, for the time being, it is the advanced race." In other words, the South "perceives important qualita-

tive differences between its culture and the Negroes', and intends to assert its own," an intention Buckley approves:

If the majority wills what is socially atavistic, then to thwart the majority may be, though undemocratic, enlightened. It is more important for any community, anywhere in the world, to affirm and live by civilized standards, than to bow to the demands of the numerical majority.

Buckley's subsequent treatment of civil rights issues was more circumspect. In 1957 he regarded the whites' civilization as more advanced both subjectively and objectively. The South *perceives* important differences between white and black culture, and the white community is the advanced race and what blacks would bring about *is* atavistic.

Later, Buckley emphasized only the subjective element. Abandoning the argument that



whites were objectively more civilized, however, sometimes led to expressions of solicitude for Southern whites who were conspicuously *uncivilized*. A 1961 editorial beseeches readers to try to understand those whites who responded to the provocation posed by the Northern "Freedom Riders" by beating the crap out of a few of them. "Jim Crow at the bus stations strikes us as unnecessary, and even wrong," Buckley said, but this is "irrelevant" because it "does not strike the average white Southerner as wrong."

That is what *they* feel, and *they* feel that *their* life is for *them* to structure; that the Negro has grown up under generally benevolent circumstances, considering where he started and how far he had to go; that he is making progress; that the coexistence of that progress and the Southern way of life demand, for the time being, separation.

This was indeed what the South felt, or at least what it said it felt during the early years of the civil rights movement. Buckley's characterization resembles that of the "Southern Manifesto," signed in 1956 by nearly every senator and representative from the South. The Manifesto charged the Supreme Court's *Brown* decision with

destroying the amicable relations between the white and Negro races that have been created through 90 years of patient effort by the good people of both races. It has planted hatred and suspicion where there has been heretofore friendship and understanding.

It's hard for modern readers to decide whether cynicism, or delusion, explains such an assessment.

The single most disturbing thing about Buckley's reactions to the civil rights controversies was the asymmetry of his sympathies—genuine concern for Southern whites beset by integrationists, but more often than not, perfunctory concern for Southern blacks beset by bigots. This disparity culminated in a position on violence committed by whites against blacks and civil rights activists that was reliably equivocal. Like the liberals of the 1960s who didn't condone riots in Watts and Detroit but always understood them, Buckley regularly coupled the obligatory criticism of Southern whites' violent acts with a longer and more fervent denunciation of the provocations that elicited them. Thus, "the nation cannot get away with feigning surprise" when a mob of white students attacks a black woman admitted to the University of Alabama by federal court order in 1956. "For in defiance of constitutional practice, with a total disregard of custom and tradition, the Supreme Court, a year ago, illegalized a whole set of deeply-rooted folkways and mores; and now we are engaged in attempting to enforce our law." Thus, the Freedom Riders went into the South to "challenge with language of unconditional surrender" the whites' "deeply felt" beliefs, and were "met, inevitably, by a spastic response. By violence."

There is much to be said for the Burkean notion that social change unfolds best when it is the unplanned, incremental result of particular actions and concrete realities, rather than imposed sweepingly, from afar, on the basis of lofty abstractions. There is something to be said for the position that modern Burkeans can demonstrate their attachment to this idea by applying it to the hard cases as well as the easy ones. There is almost nothing to be said in defense of conservatives' profound misjudgment about the civil rights movement. Their response to it was that the only solution to the problem of apartheid in the American South was to wait, for

however many decades it required, for blacks' infinite forbearance and whites' latent decency to somehow work things out. To act more assertively, in this view, amounted to intolerable, heavy-handed social engineering, far worse than the problem that needed fixing.

The one thing in conservatives' favor is that people passing judgment many years later on the conduct of historical actors in turbulent and fraught situations should remember that we know how the story turned out and they didn't. The fact that "massive resistance" by irreconcilable Southern whites collapsed fairly quickly, rather than metastasizing into protracted and bloody chaos, doesn't prove the chaos couldn't possibly have happened, or that the conservatives who warned against it were either fools or hypocrites. This lone mitigation does not, however, absolve the conservatives who, confronted with the outrage of sanctioned racial oppression, calibrated how little rather than how much they could do to end it.

Fringe or Mainstream

AMONG CONSERVATIVES IN THE 21ST CENTURY—the ones in politics, journalism, and think tanks—99% would never praise segregation with faint damns, in print or even in thought. Many of them, born after the battle against Jim Crow was fought and settled, don't even realize there is another 1%. It's constituted by dogmatists who have extended the logic of libertarianism to blaming Big Government on Abraham Lincoln, then to admiring the Confederacy, and finally to speaking—both matter-of-factly and stridently—about the civilizational and genetic inferiority of blacks. When the mainstream conservatives do become acquainted with the fringe, either in print or in person, they quickly conclude that it's populated by cranks and creeps.

There's no rule, however, that a repellent person can't have a legitimate gripe. The pariahs are entitled to ask whether they missed a memo. The rest of the conservatives quietly abandoned the old complacency about racial discrimination, but never really repudiated it. Though Randians, Birchers, and anti-Semites were expelled from the conservative movement in the 1950s, all were extended the courtesy of eviction notices in *National Review*. A decade later, apologetics for the brutality of Jim Crow disappeared from *NR*'s pages, but without explanation. By 1968 Buckley was telling George Wallace on "Firing Line" that the constitutional rights of the people of Alabama were being trampled—but he was referring to blacks' rights to demonstrate and vote, not to whites' rights to perpetuate segregation. Buckley himself seemed bewildered by this pivot. "Honestly," he said to Wallace, "you're

forcing me to sound like a liberal, which has never happened to me before in my entire life."

In December 2002 Trent Lott resigned as the Senate majority leader after it was revealed he had said,

When [in 1948] Strom Thurmond ran [as a "Dixiecrat"] for president, we [in Mississippi] voted for him. We're proud of it. And if the rest of the country had followed our lead, we wouldn't have had all these problems over all these years, either.

Charles Krauthammer accused Lott of "historical blindness that is utterly disqualifying for national office." William Buckley wrote that,

whatever else is to be said about the old South, segregation was an ugly feature of it, and that to think back poignantly about how it was in those golden days requires, if you are a public figure doing



the nostalgia, the reiterated expulsion of features of that life.

According to Jonah Goldberg,

Racism, at least the open and active racism which sustained the 1948 Dixiecrat vision, is simply astoundingly rare on the Right. In fact, prior to Trent Lott's idiocy, most conservatives I know would have assumed it did not exist at all—except among the fever swamps of the so-called paleo-Right.

In rebuttal, one resident of that swamp, Paul Craig Roberts, approvingly cited another:

It was left to the libertarian Llewellyn Rockwell to point out that, fundamentally, states' rights is about the Tenth Amendment, not segregation. Thurmond's po-

litical movement sought a return to the enumerated powers guaranteed by the Constitution to the states.

This was exactly the position taken by Buckley in a 1956 *National Review* editorial:

[S]upport for the Southern position rests not at all on the question whether Negro and White children should, in fact, study geography side by side; but on whether a central or a local authority should make that decision.

It's a position he reiterated in a 1962 column, which acknowledged at some length "the suspicion that the entire white Southern community is simply seeking, in its war against the Negro, to find a respectable terminology through which to fight that fight." Nonetheless, the South's "political cause is admirable," because "It is the cause of home rule, and it is the essence of the American system."

Conservatism won't be undone because an embittered fringe insists that it alone remains true to the faith abandoned by the faint-hearted mainstream. The real danger comes from adversaries who insist the fringe embodies the movement better than the mainstream. The Lott story was driven by liberals, principally the blogger Joshua Micah Marshall, who believe—or avail themselves of the political advantages of professing to believe—that the essence of conservatism is and always has been Dixiecrat-ism. This is not a point of antiquarian interest; the clear implication is that everything that conservatism has accomplished and stood for since 1965—Reagan, the tax revolt, law-and-order, deregulation, the fight against affirmative action, the critique of the welfare state...everything—is the poisoned fruit of the poisoned tree.

Lines in the Sand

HARSH AS IT IS, THIS LIBERAL ACCUSATION misses an important point: the hardest question the triumph of the civil rights movement raises about conservatism is not whether its stated purpose of restoring the founders' republic was a ruse designed to perpetuate racial inequality. Rather, it is to what extent that sincerely held belief was ever feasible and coherent. The troubling incongruity is not conservatives' initial tolerance of segregation for the sake of limited government, but the later, tacit admission that America did well to expand the purview of the federal government in order to end Jim Crow. Trent Lott had only to suggest lightly that relying on those means to secure that end was still regrettable to set off a stampede of conservatives to denounce him.



the *Brown* decision and the Montgomery boycott. Barry Goldwater got 6% in 1964, and in the ten subsequent presidential elections the Republican candidate's performance has never been more than a slight improvement on Goldwater's. As Ta-Nehisi Coates recently argued in the *Atlantic Monthly*, a sizeable portion of the black electorate consists of latent conservatives "who favor hard work and moral reform over protests and government intervention." Invariably, however, the black American who feels this way "votes Democratic, not out of any love for abortion rights or progressive taxation, but because he feels—in fact, he knows—that the modern-day GOP draws on the support of people who hate him."

The "honest reckoning with their intellectual complicity with segregation" that Daniel Gross called for is, however, more than a propitiation conservatives owe blacks. It's also a duty they owe their own best ideas. The obtuseness about segregation, the big way in which Buckley and the conservatives were wrong, obscures all the important ways they were right, and prescient.

Getting It Right

CONSERVATIVES' COMPLICITY WITH SEGREGATION made it easy for liberals to dismiss all their arguments against the post-1965 civil rights agenda. Conservatives are not the only ones today who have reason to regret that conservative arguments of an earlier day were ignored. It would be as hard today to find a liberal who thinks busing was a good idea, a well-considered venture we should eagerly try again, as to find a conservative willing to accept the resegregation of restaurants in order to effect the reinvigoration of the Commerce Clause. Conservatives tried to draw the line in an indefensible place, holding out for a solution to segregation that involved no expansion or invigoration of government at all. In doing so, they ceded moral authority to those who insisted there should be no lines whatsoever, who were determined to embrace any expansion of government that might further the nebulously defined goal of racial justice. Liberals came to grief over civil rights because they had no stopping point, while conservatives came to grief because they had no starting point.

As a result, conservatives have had to struggle for 40 years to assert the standing to criticize the civil rights movement's excesses. Conservatives were right, for example, about the extent and implications of Martin Luther King's enterprise. King has been turned into a dashboard saint for the anodyne, apolitical cause of human brotherhood. There's insufficient recollection of the King who in 1967 called for "a radical revolution of values" to "get on the right side of the world revolution" against a society where "profit motives and property rights are considered more

important than people."

By 1979 Buckley urged, ungrudgingly, a national holiday in recognition of King's "courage," the "galvanizing quality" of his rhetoric, and his role as "the black American who consummated the civil war Abraham Lincoln undertook, largely animated by his belief in metaphysical equality." Buckley sensed early on, however, that the consummation of the Civil War was not the consummation of King's ambitions, and that a radical leftward shift of America's foreign policy and political economy was.

Buckley understood as well that the civil rights movement was fully prepared to resort to expansive methods to achieve its expansive goals. The point of "nonviolent direct action," according to King's "Letter From a Birmingham Jail," was to "create such a crisis," "foster such a tension," and "so to dramatize the issue that it can no longer be ignored." King's stipulation, "One who breaks an unjust law must do so openly, lovingly, and with a willingness to accept the penalty," was likely to prove a thin membrane restraining the individual conscience free to decide which laws were just or unjust, and therefore deserved to be obeyed or violated.

At the time of his murder, King was planning a Poor People's Campaign that, according to a recent CNN story, intended to "paralyze the nation's capital" if the government refused to enact an "economic bill of rights for poor people," part of, in King's words, the "radical redistribution

of economic power" America required. It was in keeping with an agenda King had announced the previous year, and which Buckley had derided:

Now Dr. Martin Luther King proposes massive "dislocations." Not violent dislocations, understand. Just "massive civil disobedience," like blocking plant gates, highways, government operations, sit-ins in federal buildings, that kind of thing. But not violent, repeat. The man reporting to work at his factory is not expected to press his way through Dr. King's human wall, nor the wife driving her car to pick up her child at school, to trample the toes of the *satyagrahi*. No violence, just a national convulsion.

In 1969 Buckley wrote, "Dr. King's discovery of the transcendent rights of the individual conscience is the kind of thing that killed Jim Crow all right. But it is also the kind of thing that killed Bobby Kennedy." Though King and Malcolm X are usually recalled as opposites, the Franciscan and the militant, Buckley's argument is that the logic of King's position carried him closer and closer to the stance, By Any Means Necessary, associated with Malcolm. That assertion would have gained more traction had it not been for Buckley's earlier expressions of sympathy for those who defended segregation by any means necessary.

"THE POLITICAL BOOK OF 2008"*

A bracing plan to give the Republican Party a lasting mandate by refocusing on what really matters to the working class.

"Memo to John McCain: Please, please READ THIS BOOK. It can help you win the election and guide Republicans in shaping the future."

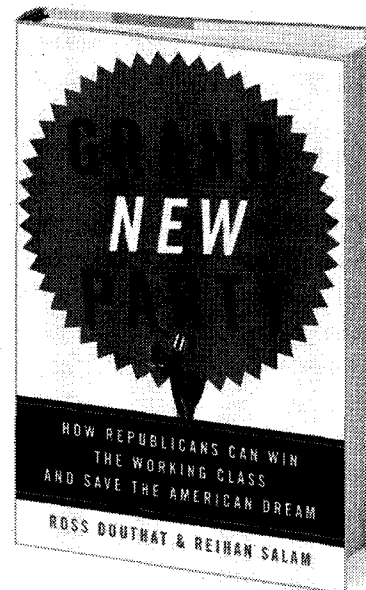
—WILLIAM KRISTOL, editor, *The Weekly Standard**

"Thoughtful and important—a guidebook for Republicans in distress."

—DAVID FRUM, author of *Comeback*

"A serious, sane, secular, constructive argument about where conservatism needs to go."

—ANDREW SULLIVAN, author of *The Conservative Soul*



DD DOUBLEDAY

Available wherever books are sold • www.doubleday.com

The Gift of Affirmative Action

AS IT HAPPENS, "BY ANY MEANS NECESSARY" is the name of a group that agitates on behalf of affirmative action. (Among other things. Its full name is the Coalition to Defend Affirmative Action, Integration & Immigrant Rights and Fight for Equality By Any Means Necessary.) Affirmative action has been the civil rights movement's political gift to the conservative movement. Conservatives have been delighted by the chance, finally, to present themselves as the ones articulating a principled egalitarian argument on behalf of innocent people whose prospects in life were diminished when they were judged according to the color of their skin rather than the content of their characters.

Since conservatives strenuously opposed all the major civil rights laws, they can't really be aghast that liberals are not eager to sign off on their interpretation of what the laws demand and proscribe. Barry Goldwater criticized the Civil Rights Act of 1964 not only because its provisions "fly in the face of the Constitution," but because they "require for their effective execution the creation of a police state," which sounds a lot over the top. Though he was wrong about its enforcement, Goldwater had grasped something important about the law, especially the employment discrimination provisions: the new crimes, by and large, were going to be thought-crimes. Employers who were stupid and racist enough to actually announce they didn't hire blacks couldn't possibly be the only ones the law was meant to sanction. There had to be some way to protect blacks who were the victims of covert rather than overt discrimination.

The problem is that one employer's—or bureaucrat's, or judge's—covert discrimination is another's good-faith effort to hire and retain the best available workforce at market wages. Goldwater anticipated that endless disputes over why Jones was *really* promoted over Smith would result in

the development of an "informer" psychology in great areas of our national life—neighbors spying on neighbors, workers spying on workers, businessmen spying on businessmen, where those who would harass their fellow citizens for selfish and narrow purposes will have ample inducement to do so.

To their credit, the civil rights enforcers declined to turn America into East Germany for the sake of equal opportunity.

To their discredit, the civil rights enforcers decided that since hiring processes were essentially thought processes, and therefore difficult to police, the thing to regulate would be hiring

results, which were easy to police. The employer whose workforce was a perfect miniature of the local labor market had nothing to worry about. The bigger the demographic disparity between the employee roster and the phonebook, the more explaining the employer would have to do.

One might have expected that businessmen would push back against the bureaucrats leaning on them about which employees to hire, retain, and promote. In fact, the spirit of the shrewd Yankee trader, looking for an edge, triumphed over the spirit of the don't-tread-on-me patriot. Each employer realized that every other firm in his industry faced the same regulatory regime, so there was no competitive disadvantage to complying with it. Firms that become adept at pursuing ordinary business objectives while avoiding exposure to equal opportunity litigation would secure an advantage, particularly against smaller competitors not yet savvy about gaming the system and more dependent on getting just the right workers in the right jobs. As a last resort, while all sorts of ostensibly race-neutral personnel practices have gotten employers into trouble if they had a "disparate impact" on racial minorities, the disparate impact test has never been applied to business decisions about where to locate factories and offices. This is why the civil rights law is sometimes referred to as the Minnesota Full Employment Act.

The conservative argument against affirmative action is that it's a brazen violation of the letter and spirit of the civil rights laws, the most flagrant bait-and-switch operation in American political history. Among the rebuttals, the weakest is "So what?"—the purpose of the law was to help blacks and those enforcing it have set out to do so by, well, any means necessary. The strongest though least admirable is caveat emptor—if you'd read the fine print you would have seen that the potential, the inevitability, of affirmative action was there all along. Conservatives warned that the civil rights movement would create a superstate, and that didn't happen. What did happen is that interest-group liberalism extended its regime of "policy without law," in Theodore Lowi's phrase, to the adjudication of civil rights.

Doing the Right Thing

WILLIAM BUCKLEY WROTE ABOUT AFFIRMATIVE action less often, and less angrily, than other conservatives. For someone accused of standing in the way of racial progress, he regularly addressed the issue by expressing hope for a solution that promoted racial reconciliation and black advancement. As early as 1968, writing on the fierce battle between black radicals and white pub-

lic school teachers in New York City's Ocean Hill-Brownsville neighborhood, Buckley listed himself as one who approved of "discriminatory hiring in favor of blacks"—provided that "the concomitant obligation to protect the whites whose jobs are taken" was discharged. By 1977, as the *Bakke* case was being considered by the Supreme Court, he was retrieving the Burkean perspective he had applied to the South. Blacks' problems, he said,

are best handled by the myriad decisions reached in a million situations every day.... The employer who surveys the application forms of a half-dozen candidates for an opening and quietly gives the advantage to the black candidate is, in my opinion, doing the right thing. But what he did could not stand the test of universalization. You could not take that discreet preferment and write legislation about it.

Buckley and the early *National Review* conservatives went too far in hoping that such discreet preferments would suffice to end Jim Crow. Their subsequent acknowledgments that the suffering and national disgrace caused by segregation required stronger measures have not satisfied their opponents. Given the political advantages to liberals of conflating racism and conservatism, it's doubtful there is any degree of contrition they would find acceptable.

Martin Luther King and the civil rights movement went too far in the other direction, overconfident about the large benefits and negligible costs of politicizing all the spaces in which Americans live their lives. The lesson that federal government intervention could extinguish the wickedness of segregation was learned too well, and reinforced the liberal conviction that government could—and therefore must—intervene to eradicate every social ill, no matter how large or amorphous, affecting minority groups. The higher lawlessness of civil disobedience was absorbed by the lower lawlessness of interest-group liberalism. Myriad decisions in a million situations—such as job interviews, college applications, and training programs—need now comply with federal "standards" that are rarely clear or constant, and are always subject to further revisions driven by perpetual interest-group lobbying. Any reckoning of what William Buckley and the conservatives failed to see in the civil rights era must also account for these deformities, which they did see and which everyone else missed.

William Voegeli is a visiting scholar at Claremont McKenna College's Henry Salvatori Center for the Study of Individual Freedom in the Modern World.

NIXON'S THE ONE

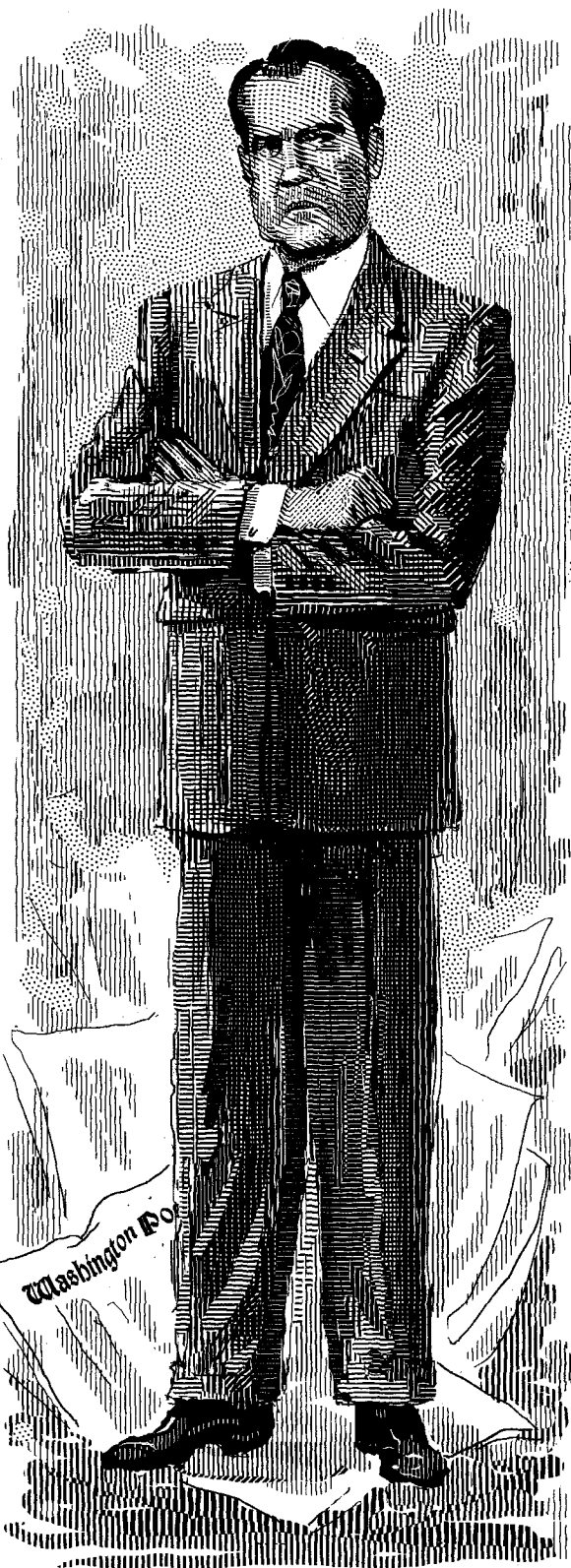
Richard M. Nixon: A Life in Full, by Conrad Black.
PublicAffairs, 1,184 pages, \$40

ON MARCH 3, CONRAD BLACK REPORTED TO Coleman Federal Correctional Complex in Florida. The Canadian-British newspaper magnate was starting a 78-month sentence following his conviction on charges of fraud and obstruction of justice. Before going to prison, Black finished a massive biography of Richard Nixon. Some reviewers have dismissed the book as one crook's effort to rehabilitate another.

That judgment is off base. Although Black sympathizes with his subject, he finds much to criticize. He accuses Nixon of "self-righteous hypocrisy" in the Alger Hiss spy case. Black tells of a "shabby ploy" at the 1952 GOP convention in which Nixon publicly backed California Governor Earl Warren while privately working for Dwight Eisenhower. Of Nixon's mockery of Watergate defendants who were "stonewalling" on his behalf, Black writes: "Nixon was plumbing a new depth of cynicism in this fetid affair."

He reserves harsher judgments for others. He applies the term "rutting panther" both to John F. Kennedy and Jesse Jackson. He sneers at "heart-on-sleeve, flannel-mouthed leftists" and repeatedly charges the news media with treating Nixon unfairly. Drawing on firsthand knowledge, he paints a damning picture of Nixon's key foreign policy advisor: "Kissinger always has been an inexhaustible storehouse of nasty opinions about almost everyone. Only a few extremely powerful or intimate people are exempt from his rather unattractive habit of running down everyone, no matter how congenial he is with the subjects when he sees them."

Such observations are the book's most engrossing aspect. Largely absent is the primary-source research that one might expect from such a volume. The endnotes show that Black drew heavily on secondary sources, with only a modest amount of archival work. He often cites *Nixon: The Education of a Politician* (1987), the first volume of Stephen E. Ambrose's comprehensive trilogy. Unfortunately, he seems to have overlooked the best-researched account of Nixon's early political career, Irwin Gellman's *The Contender* (1999). Buffs can also pick a few factual nits. Black says that Representative Jerry Voorhis, who lost his seat to Nixon in 1946, got his graduate degree at Claremont College. It was actually Claremont Graduate



School. (That distinction is a big deal in Claremont.) In his section on the 1950s, he labels Ronald Reagan as a "former" Democrat and Walter Cronkite as "legendary." Neither adjective would apply until the following decade.

Another limitation is uneven coverage of Nixon's

on's policies. On the one hand, Black's treatment of international affairs is extensive. Although critics have slammed him for appearing to airbrush episodes like the overthrow of Chilean President Salvador Allende, he does offer a good deal of detail on Nixon's diplomatic and military strategies. On the other hand, he tends to slight economics and domestic policy. He gives only a casual mention to the decision to impose wage and price controls. In his memoirs, Nixon himself offered a deeper, tougher appraisal. The decision, he wrote, "was politically necessary and immensely popular in the short run. But in the long run I believe that it was wrong. The piper must always be paid, and there was an unquestionably high price for tampering with the orthodox economic mechanisms."

Similarly, Black skates across poverty policy, claiming that Nixon "was an early champion of welfare reform." He implies that Nixon's 1969 proposal foreshadowed the overhaul that passed in 1996. The Clinton-era measure ended the federal entitlement, shifted the policy focus to workfare, and devolved authority to the states; Nixon's Family Assistance Plan would have gone in the opposite direction. As a Nixon advisor, Daniel Patrick Moynihan crafted the plan, which centered on a \$1,600 basic federal benefit for a family of four. In his book about its defeat, Moynihan quoted Nixon as saying: "I don't give a damn about the work requirement. This is the price of getting the \$1,600."

BLACK'S RESEARCH AND POLICY ANALYSIS may be faulty, but his timing is superb. As the 2008 presidential race unfolds, this book reminds us that Nixon's career anticipated key features of contemporary politics. There has been much talk lately about the "latte liberals" who played such a big part in the early Democratic primaries. The term is fairly recent, but the concept was familiar to Nixon. During his first term in Congress, he fought liberal intellectuals over the Alger Hiss spy case. Whittaker Chambers, the repentant ex-Communist who exposed the story, contrasted "the glittering Hiss forces" with Nixon and his fellow anti-Communists. "The inclusive fact about them," wrote Chambers, in *Witness*, "is that, in contrast to the pro-Hiss rally, most

of them, regardless of what they had made of themselves, came from the wrong side of the railroad tracks."

Hiss did not hide his disdain. Black recounts a hearing in which Hiss told Nixon: "I attended Harvard Law School. I believe yours was Whittier." Hiss erred in two ways. First, he got his facts wrong: Nixon received his legal education at Duke Law School. More important, Hiss's hauteur made it easier for Nixon to portray him as a villain. (It also helped, as declassified documents later confirmed, that Hiss was guilty as sin.) Nearly all of Hiss's supporters were patriotic and well-intentioned, but a fair number shared his arrogance. "No feature of the Hiss case is more obvious, or more troubling as history," wrote Chambers, "than the jagged fissure, which it did not so much open as reveal, between the plain men and women of the nation, and those who affected to act, think, and speak for them."

For decades, the "jagged fissure" would work to Nixon's advantage. As president, he framed the debate over Vietnam as a conflict between the "silent majority" and long-haired protesters from elite colleges. Vice President Agnew denounced "an effete corps of impudent snobs who characterize themselves as intellectuals." Ever since Nixon, Democratic leaders have repeatedly left themselves open to the same kind of attack. In 1988, Michael Dukakis told Iowa farmers that they might want to grow Belgian endive. In 2000, Al Gore sighed his way through a key debate. In 2004, John Kerry bragged that foreign leaders wanted him to win. The Bush family is hardly from the wrong side of the railroad tracks. But facing such opponents, the 41st and 43rd presidents managed to cast themselves as champions of the plain people against Ivy League twits.

OBSERVERS OFTEN BEMOAN THE NEGATIVITY of today's campaigns, but Nixon was playing in a rough league more than half a century ago. In the 1950 California Senate race, his supporters called Democratic candidate Helen Gahagan Douglas "the pink lady," suggesting that she was a pale version of a Red. (In those days, "Red" meant Communist, not Republican.) Even Nixon admirers must cringe at his 1952 attack on President Harry Truman, Secretary of State Dean Acheson, and Democratic presidential nominee Adlai Stevenson as "traitors to the high principles in

which many of the nation's Democrats believe." He joked that Stevenson got a degree from "Acheson's College of Cowardly Communist Containment," a line that seems especially nasty and inappropriate in light of Acheson's later reputation as a hero of anti-Communism.

These tactics prompted the cartoonist Herblock to depict Nixon as a sewer rat and Douglas to dub him "Tricky Dick." That much is familiar. But as Black explains, Nixon's foes were just as venomous, if not more so. Douglas accused him of "nice, unadulterated fascism," and, evoking Mussolini's Blackshirts, referred to "the backwash of Republican young men in dark shirts." On the eve of the 1956 election, Stevenson capped his second presidential campaign by alluding to Eisenhower's heart attack the year before: "Distasteful as this matter is, I must say bluntly that every piece of scientific evidence we have, every lesson of history and experience, indicates that a Republican victory tomorrow would mean that Richard M. Nixon probably would be President of this country within the next four years." Black rightly notes that such comments "were more contemptible than anything Nixon had come up with."

NIXON, OF COURSE, WAS FAR MORE THAN the instigator and target of political attacks. He was a shrewd political strategist and tactician. Whether or not they care to admit it, today's top political leaders are following political trails that Nixon marked out. After his narrow 1960 loss to JFK and his crushing defeat in the 1962 California gubernatorial race, his name became synonymous with "pathetic loser." Yet he managed to come back and win the GOP presidential nomination in 1968. How did he do it? In part, he benefited from his competitors' weaknesses. Michigan Governor George Romney flamed out in a blaze of ineptitude. New York Governor Nelson Rockefeller stood too far to the left for most Republicans and dithered about entering the race. California Governor Ronald Reagan was not quite ready, having served less than two years in public office.

But Nixon had to work very hard to exploit the opportunity. The nomination fight was more of a close-run thing than Black suggests. Nixon won with 692 delegates, a mere 25 more than he needed. The loser image still weighed him down, and no party faction saw him as one of their own. Conversely, however, he positioned himself so that most Republican leaders considered him

acceptable. He won endorsements from conservatives like John Tower, Barry Goldwater, and Strom Thurmond. He also got the support of the most famous moderate of them all: Dwight Eisenhower.

In 2008, John McCain won the nomination in a similar way. His opponents—including George Romney's son—washed out for a variety of reasons, leaving him as the last man standing. Like Nixon, he won grudging acceptance from the party's wings. Economic conservatives regretted his opposition to tax cuts but consoled themselves that he was a foe of pork-barrel spending. Social conservatives still smarted from his immigration bill and his attacks on the Religious Right, but he was able to point to a pro-life voting record.

Even Democrats have taken Nixonian approaches. Obama's "we are one nation" rhetoric could have come straight from Nixon's 1969 inaugural. During the Texas primary campaign, Hillary Clinton ran an ad playing up her qualifications to handle a crisis. It pictured a phone ringing in the White House in the middle of the night.

Your vote will decide who answers that call, whether it's someone who already knows the world's leaders, knows the military—someone tested and ready to lead in a dangerous world. It's 3 a.m., and your children are safe and asleep. Who do you want answering the phone?

This spot echoed a 1968 Nixon ad:

Think about it: when the decisions of one man can affect the future of your family for generations to come, what kind of a man do you want making those decisions? Think about it: who is the one man who has the experience and the qualifications to lead America in these troubled, dangerous times? Nixon's the one.

Don't expect politicians to credit Nixon as an inspiration. For many voters, his reputation remains radioactive. But if you had to pick the political figure who did the most to shape and model the way we practice politics today, Nixon would indeed be the one.

John J. Pitney, Jr., is the Roy P. Crocker Professor of American Politics at Claremont McKenna College.

BEARING WITNESS

JUSTICE CLARENCE THOMAS INTRODUCES HIS memoir, *My Grandfather's Son*, as "the story of an ordinary man to whom extraordinary things happened." That's the only part he got wrong. As his autobiography makes clear, it is the man who is extraordinary, not the circumstances. "The freest black man in America," Shelby Steele calls him. "The greatest living American," says Bill Bennett. To these, we should add the *essential American*: the black man on the center stage of our public life who has dared to say he loves America, and loved her from her start, even when that love seemed painfully unrequited.

In the 17 years since Justice Thomas took his seat on the Supreme Court, various friends, adversaries, journalists, and scholars have tried to tell his story. But, as he explains in his memoir (quoting the late William F. Buckley, Jr.), "Only the man who makes the voyage can speak truly about it." The most recent spate of books on Thomas—some released within months of his own memoir—prove to varying degrees that he and Buckley are correct. *My Grandfather's Son* is beautifully written, evocative, and jarring in its candor about the lowest points in his life—the bigotry he encountered, his struggles with alcohol, finances, his first marriage and divorce, the loss and rediscovery of his faith, and of course, his Senate confirmation saga. It's the full story of Thomas's life up to the moment he joins the Supreme Court. (As a sitting Justice, he can't go further and discuss matters on the Court.)

Daddy's Son

ONLY THOMAS CAN REALLY TELL THE story suggested by his book's title, which centers on the man who raised and molded him: his maternal grandfather, whom he called "Daddy." Myers Anderson, the relentlessly disciplined, hard-working, Catholic convert and ultimate tough-love parent—"dark, strong, proud"—was "the one hero in my life," writes Thomas. "What I am is what he made me." Thomas's biological father merely "sired" Clarence and his two siblings; their mother divorced M.C. Thomas in 1950, two years after Clarence was born. After their shanty in Pinpoint, Georgia, burned down when Thomas was six, he moved with his mother to a tenement in Savannah, which he describes as "hell": "[o]vernight I moved from the comparative safety and

cleanliness of rural poverty to the foulest kind of urban squalor." Earning ten dollars per week for housekeeping, receiving zero child support, and refusing to go on welfare, Thomas's mother decided to send her sons to live with her father and his wife, who lived in a cinder block house painted a "gleaming white."

Daddy told the boys that if they learned how to work, they could live as well as he did, and that would be their "inheritance." The boys' first job, he said, was to get a good education. "It would be too generous," Thomas writes, to call Daddy himself "semiliterate"; he "struggled mightily with the newspaper and the Bible, and once he mastered a passage of Scripture he would read it over and over again." But Daddy's self-reliance is a piece of the segregated South that liberals today like to forget. He exhorted the young Clarence to learn,

keep the faith, never give up, and never mind what other people do, say, or think. His staunch refusal to view himself as a victim was summed up in his advice to Thomas to "play the hand you're dealt." The cover photograph on *My Grandfather's Son* shows Thomas, apparently looking at the (off camera) bust of Myers Anderson that sits in his Supreme Court chambers, bearing as its inscription one of his favorite sayings to Clarence: "Old Man Can't is dead. I helped bury him."

In Savannah, Georgia, the boys worked every day after school and all day Saturday with Daddy in his fuel-oil delivery business, and in summers, on a farm in nearby Liberty County (where they built a four-room cinder block house with their own hands), plowing, planting, cutting wood, cleaning fish, skinning animals, killing chickens, all the while fighting off heat, gnats, flies, mosquitoes, and snakes—the last of which reappear metaphorically in the book. As a boy, Thomas learned that Georgia rattlesnakes, while deadly, at least give some advance notice of their attack. He later reflects that they were like the Southerners who were "up front about their bigotry"; at least "you knew exactly where they were coming from." Worse were the water moccasins, which strike without warning. He thinks of them when he encounters "paternalistic big-city whites" who "pretended to side with black people while using them to further their own political and social ends, turning against them when it suited their purposes."

Daddy had converted to Roman Catholicism in 1949 (the year after Thomas was born), and faithfully brought the boys to the pre-Vatican II mass where they learned their Latin responses by heart and served as altar boys. The nuns at Catholic school taught them that "God made all men equal, that blacks were inherently equal to whites." Young Clarence learned—at the age when children can drink in such truth—that God loves him infinitely, that he was the equal in God's eyes of any other man, and that every man's rights flow from God, not from any earthly master. This, combined with Daddy's lessons in discipline, work habits, and self-denial, formed Thomas's soul. Still, when a restive Clarence once told Daddy that "slavery was over," he replied: "Not in my house."

Later, Thomas strayed from his grandfather's principles. In the 1960s at Holy Cross, he became an angry black radical. He left the Church.

My Grandfather's Son: A Memoir,
by Clarence Thomas.

HarperCollins, 304 pages,
\$26.95 (cloth), \$15.95 (paper)

*Supreme Discomfort: The Divided
Soul of Clarence Thomas,*

by Kevin Merida and Michael
A. Fletcher. Doubleday, 432 pages,
\$26.95 (cloth), \$15.95 (paper)

*Supreme Conflict: The Inside Story
of the Struggle for Control*

of the United States Supreme Court,
by Jan Crawford Greenburg.
Penguin Press, 368 pages,
\$27.95 (cloth), \$16 (paper)

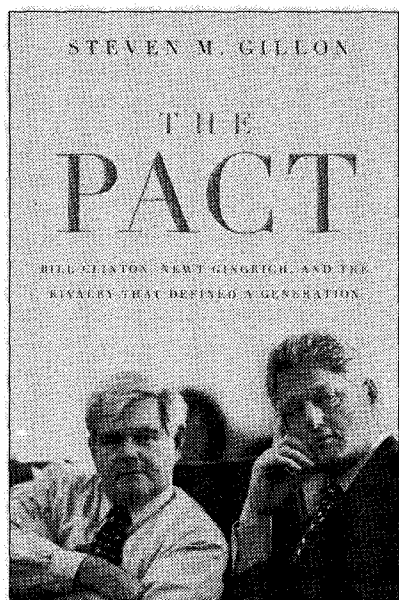
*The Supreme Court Opinions
of Clarence Thomas, 1991-2006:*

A Conservative's Perspective,
edited by Henry Mark Holzer.
McFarland & Company,
232 pages, \$39.95

*First Principles: The Jurisprudence
of Clarence Thomas,* by Scott

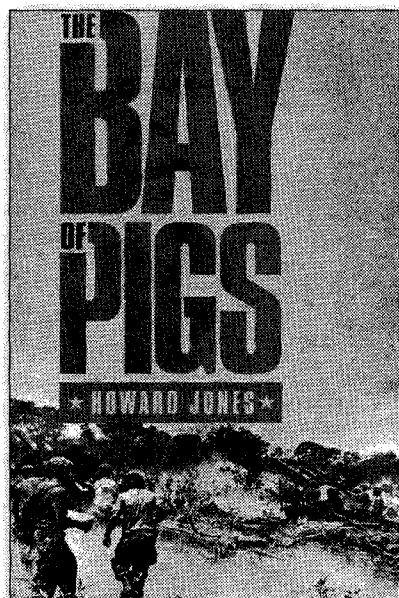
Douglas Gerber. New York
University Press, 281 pages,
\$65 (cloth), \$22 (paper)

NEW FROM OXFORD



**"An important book
about a fascinating episode."**

—E. J. DIONNE, JR., author of
Why Americans Hate Politics



**"May become the
preferred single-source
reference to an
episode whose foreign
policy and military
implications continue
to reverberate."**

—Kirkus Reviews

AVAILABLE WHEREVER
BOOKS ARE SOLD
www.oup.com/us

OXFORD
UNIVERSITY PRESS

When "the beast of rage...slipped its leash," or when the mounting injustices and humiliations seemed unendurable, he was consumed with anger and despair. But the story of *My Grandfather's Son* is how Thomas comes full circle, returning to the roots that Daddy nurtured. It is a story of incredible triumph, always tinged with the great sadness that Thomas never fully reconciled with Daddy before his death. Thomas's poignant response to this—vowing "to live my life as a memorial" to his—suggests a path for anyone who did not fully appreciate his parents until they were gone.

High-Tech Lynching

THE BRUTAL HONESTY OF THE MEMOIR IS ALL the more remarkable because most public figures are far more guarded in writing about themselves; their memoirs are designed to further political or other ambitions. But Thomas wrote his book to "bear witness" to what Daddy and others have done for him, to tell his story accurately and not "to leave the telling to those with careless hands or malicious hearts," and to inspire those who might identify with some part of his story and need hope, as he did, to go on. And unlike most other public figures, Thomas really can write. Literature transported his young mind beyond the segregated South while at the same time helping him to understand it. He studied Latin as a teenager and English literature in college. As an adult, his "interest in Churchill kindled a love of reading for its own sake."

Of course, Thomas's most famous utterance was his statement before the United States Senate Judiciary Committee:

I think that this hearing should never occur in America.... And from my standpoint, as a black American...it is a high-tech lynching for uppity blacks who in any way deign to think for themselves, to do for themselves, to have different ideas, and it is a message that unless you kowtow to an old order, this is what will happen to you, you will be lynched, destroyed, caricatured, by a committee of the U.S. Senate rather than hung from a tree.

In *My Grandfather's Son*, we learn how those words came together only moments before they were delivered to the Senate and the nation, as a drained Thomas lay on a couch in the dimmed light of early evening in Senator John Danforth's office. He must have been thinking, he writes, of Atticus Finch's closing argument in *To Kill a Mockingbird*, about how the white mob's purpose was to keep a black man in his place, when he seized Danforth's legal pad and scrawled, "HIGH-TECH LYNCHING."

Thomas and his advisors knew any nomination that President George H.W. Bush made to the Supreme Court in 1991 was going to be highly politicized. They knew that Democratic senators, with the aid and encouragement of liberal interest groups, would try to use the confirmation hearings to "Bork" Clarence Thomas—a verb that had entered the lexicon four years earlier when the same coalition, using smears, innuendo, and outright lies, had defeated Reagan Supreme Court nominee Robert Bork. But no one knew the ferocity with which liberals would attack a black man who strayed from the ideological plantation. Thomas met with board members of the NAACP—"a waste of time," he notes—and the organization, predictably, announced its opposition to his nomination quickly thereafter, "apparently at the insistence of the AFL-CIO." The NAACP "was in effect giving a green light to the various groups that opposed my nomination, tacitly assuring them that it was now all right for them to smear a black man."

The post-nomination courtesy calls with senators revealed a similar dynamic at work. Alabama's Howell Heflin (who was commonly referred to as "courtly," but whose manner reminded Thomas of "a slave owner sitting on the porch of a plantation house") asked Thomas to return for further meetings, "but it soon became evident that his sole purpose in continuing to meet with me was to find reasons to vote against me." Bob Packwood was "direct," saying he simply could not vote for Thomas because the senator's "political career depended on support from the same women's groups that were opposing" the nomination. Al Gore said he'd vote for Thomas "if [Gore] decided not to run for President." And Fritz Hollings confessed that in order to support Thomas he'd first have to resolve "a political problem with the NAACP in his home state of South Carolina." Thomas recalls, "Strange as it may sound, I appreciated that kind of honesty" from senators who would "admit their real reasons for voting against me instead of making up some transparent excuse."

Thomas describes hauntingly the feeling he had after five days of testimony before the Senate Judiciary Committee in which Democratic senators had "pummel[ed] me with loaded questions," including attempted traps involving abortion and natural law. Everyone assumed that the hearings were over. He had been through a political meat-grinder, and "after two and a half months of constant preparation and unrelenting attacks," he and his wife Virginia promptly left Washington to try to relax in the quiet resort town of Cape May, New Jersey. But Thomas "couldn't shake the feeling that for all the intensity of their effort, my opponents were still holding something in reserve."

Sordid Tale

HAVING FOLLOWED THE HUMILIATIONS and heartbreaks that had brought Thomas to this point in the book, the reader can begin to understand what it was like to be in his shoes as the events described at the beginning of the ninth chapter—aptly titled “Invitation to a Lynching”—unfolded. The same deadly farce had been played out before in the lives of others, in history and in literature, so many times, in so many ways. It had played out in smaller ways—almost rehearsals—in Thomas’s own life: the childhood in the Jim Crow South, where his friends told him to let go of his “foolish dreams,” because “[t]he man ain’t goin’ let you do nothin’”; the seminary, where a classmate’s response to the shooting of Martin Luther King, Jr.—“[t]hat’s good, I hope the son of a bitch dies”—ended both Thomas’s vocation to the priesthood and his “youthful innocence about race”; the devastation, after compiling a record of high achievement at Holy Cross and Yale, of finding it impossible to get a law firm job because his Ivy League degree was “tainted” by racial preference. (Finally, a young Missouri Attorney General named John Danforth hired Thomas as a staff lawyer in St. Louis. When Danforth was elected to the U.S. Senate, Thomas followed him to Washington, where he caught the attention of the Reagan Administration.)

It seemed unthinkable, yet at the same time all too predictable. One day, two FBI agents arrived at his house, and “started asking questions before I could close the door behind them.” Did he know Anita Hill? Had he made sexual advances to her? From that moment, it was clear Thomas would have to prove a negative. He recalled Franz Kafka’s *The Trial*: “Someone must have been telling lies about Josef K., for without having done anything wrong he was arrested one fine morning.” His enemies thought they had found the perfect weapon to destroy him.

Ironically, in preparing for his first round of confirmation hearings, Thomas had penciled in Anita Hill as a “liberal whom I could call as a witness on my behalf should it become necessary.” Others have told pieces of the story before (some blatantly false), but to hear it finally from Thomas himself—it all makes sense. Hill was a liberal. Thomas knew this all along; in her first interview with him for a position at the Department of Education in 1981 (he was the assistant secretary for civil rights), she had told him that she “detested” Ronald Reagan. But Thomas’s close friend Gil Hardy (a black buddy from Holy Cross) had asked him to “help a sister” who was leaving Hardy’s law firm. Hill had told Thomas she could not get a recommendation from the firm because she had been sexually harassed there. So he found a way to hire her

as a non-political appointee. Though her work was only “adequate,” and though she had been “touchy and apt to overreact,” he continued to help her, at Hardy’s insistence, and allowed her to follow him in 1982 when President Reagan named him chairman of the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC).

When Thomas appointed Allyson Duncan, another black woman and “a consummate professional whose work had been consistently outstanding” as his EEOC chief of staff in 1983, Hill “stormed into” his office to protest that she had not been promoted. Hardy again pleaded with Thomas “to be patient with her.” Thomas soon after saw an opening to recommend Hill as a law professor in her native Oklahoma, and she accepted. But she continued to call Thomas over the years that followed, and the last time he remembered seeing her, she insisted on driving him to the airport after a speech she’d asked him to give in Tulsa.

Just days before the full Senate was scheduled for the final vote on Thomas’s nomination, the supposedly confidential FBI report with Hill’s wild allegations was leaked to the national media. In his memoir, Thomas describes meeting, via news reports,

for the first time an Anita Hill who bore little resemblance to the woman who had worked for me at EEOC and the Education Department. Somewhere along the line she had been transformed into a conservative, devoutly religious Reagan-administration employee.... But truth was no longer relevant: keeping me off the Supreme Court was all that mattered. These pieces of her sordid tale only needed to hold up long enough to help her establish her credibility with the public. They fell away as the rest of the story gained traction in the media, just as the fuel tank and booster rockets drop away from a space shuttle once it reaches the upper atmosphere.

Defiance of Facts

IMMEDIATELY AFTER THE RELEASE OF MY *Grandfather’s Son*, the national media grabbed the news hook to repeat Hill’s allegations and to pronounce that the “he said, she said” remains a mystery. But a rigorous journalistic assessment of the Hill tale was nowhere to be found. A case study in this failure of critical, objective journalism is *Supreme Discomfort: The Divided Soul of Clarence Thomas*, released just months before Thomas’s own book. Authors and *Washington Post* reporters Kevin Merida and Michael Fletcher fail to grapple with fundamental points about the Hill tale that don’t add up. In 16 years, no one has ever offered a plausible explana-

OUTSTANDING... from ST. AUGUSTINE’S PRESS

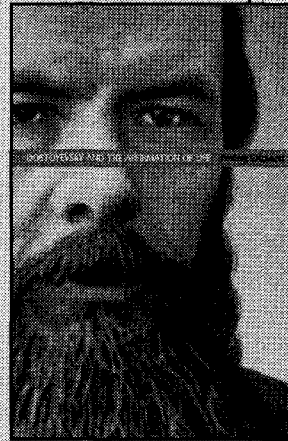
Finally, the puerile and insipid “arguments” of the “New Atheists” are met head-on instead of hat-in-hand. All previous works gave away the store entirely by framing the argument between faith and science.

The real framework is between classical Western philosophy and the desiccated imitation wrought by modern philosophers intent on creating a mechanical universe or purposeless particles overseen by omniscient man.

The Last Superstition

A thoughtful and theologically sophisticated sally into the ranks of the New Atheism. — Roger Kimball

Edward Feser



“A thoughtful and theologically sophisticated sally into the ranks of the New Atheism.” — Roger Kimball

“This is a tour de force that should be in the library of every thinking citizen, believer or unbeliever.” — Francis Beckwith

Socrates in the Underworld

On Plato’s *Gorgias*



Nalin Ranasinghe

“If the Faithless Foursome were at all interested in a serious rebuttal, they now have it.” — David Oderberg

Cicovacki’s work deals with the fundamental issue in Dostoevsky’s opus neglected by all of his commentators: How can we affirm life and preserve a healthy optimism in the face of evil and despair?

“... provokes serious thinking.” — Robert Bellarmine

Ranasinghe’s is the first full-length monograph to address the religious, ethical, and political dimensions of Plato’s *Gorgias*, which has been long been neglected because of its disconcerting moral and psychic demands it makes on readers.

Edward Feser, *The Last Superstition: A Refutation of the New Atheism* 1-58731-451-7 \$27.00 October

Predrag Cicovacki, *Dostoevsky and the Affirmation of Life* 1-58731-190-9 \$35.00 October

Nalin Ranasinghe, *Socrates in the Underworld: On Plato’s Gorgias* 1-58731-773-8 \$27.00 July

ST. AUGUSTINE’S PRESS

www.staugustine.net

tion why Anita Hill, a Yale-educated lawyer and avowed liberal, would leave the equivalent of a civil service job at the Department of Education to follow Clarence Thomas to the EEOC if she were being sexually harassed. No one, including Hill, has explained why she would continue to contact Thomas, repeatedly and insistently leaving telephone messages, including her hotel room number, inviting him to her law school in Oklahoma to speak, and insisting on driving him to the airport, if her allegations were true. No one has ever cited a case of sexual harassment where the plaintiff behaved as Anita Hill did following the alleged harassment. And the Senate testimony attempting to corroborate her own testimony was full of holes. Susan Hoerchner, Hill's main witness, had a record of liberal activism and, when interviewed by Senate staffers, contradicted Hill's testimony as to when the alleged harassment took place. Hill's attorney, who was also advising Hoerchner, called for a break when the discrepancy emerged. After the break, Hoerchner had a "failure of memory" that became her storyline at the hearings. Hill gave the FBI the names of two other employees who she said would corroborate her story. Neither did.

Of the three women who provided statements supporting Hill, Thomas had fired two of them for poor job performance and had declined to reappoint the third after she failed the bar exam. The overwhelming number of professional women who worked side-by-side with Clarence Thomas over the years, including pro-choice women, Democrats, liberals, and feminists, said Hill's story was flatly inconsistent with what they knew of him. Pam Talkin, Thomas's EEOC chief of staff, testified that her boss

was adamant that the women in the office be treated with dignity and respect. And his own behavior towards women was scrupulous. There was never a hint of impropriety, and I mean a hint. Never a gesture, never a look, never a word, never body language. None of these things that we women have a sixth sense about.

Talkin and the other women who testified similarly before the Senate committee were not allowed to do so until 2 o'clock in the morning.

A Man of Principle

MERIDA AND FLETCHER TRY TO PAINT Thomas as a tormented figure, "uncomfortable" in both the "white world" and the "black world." They tout the countless interviews and original research they conducted to figure out which is the "real" Clarence Thomas: the "magnetic" figure who strikes up friendships wherever he goes, the "ideological" figure

who is a "hero of the conservative right," or the "despised" figure who is a traitor to his race and to liberal ideals, a sellout, an Uncle Tom.

Although the first two portraits are true to different degrees, Merida and Fletcher clearly favor the third, and they twist every opportunity to portray Thomas as an Uncle Tom who, among other things, schemed to get on the Supreme Court, even lying to civil rights groups about his views. This assertion, like so many in their book, flies in the face of fact: for more than a decade, Thomas had hidden his views from no one, and battled not only with the civil rights establishment but with his fellow Reagan Administration officials.

Supreme Discomfort's snide, breathless tone may be gathered from tabloid excesses like this: "Even in his cloistered, rarefied world as a member of the most important judicial body in existence, Thomas will always be black and he knows it." Such statements are embarrassing, not only for two black journalists, but particularly when held up against the depth and nuance expressed in *My Grandfather's Son*.

Because the authors of *Supreme Discomfort* are so wedded to their "Uncle Tom" thesis, they latch onto the liberal establishment line that although Thomas was the beneficiary of affirmative action all his life, now that he's climbed to the top of the heap he has pulled up the rope behind him, and would deny the same advantage to other blacks. Yet they acknowledge that "race did not appear to play a role in Thomas's acceptance to Holy Cross" and that "Yale officials cannot say whether Thomas would have been admitted to the prestigious law school without affirmative action" because by the time he was admitted, the university had refined its affirmative action efforts, admitting minority applicants only if it believed they could do the work and thrive at Yale. Interestingly, this goes precisely to Thomas's criticism of affirmative action as it came to be practiced more broadly in the 1970s, '80s, and '90s: that it resulted in minority students being accepted into schools and environments where they could not thrive, just in order to satisfy grand theories about minority admissions or to provide a "diverse" environment that would somehow enhance the white folks' experience, irrespective of the effect it would have on the minority students.

Merida and Fletcher also repeat the canard that Thomas is a "flunky" of Justice Antonin Scalia, even as Thurgood Marshall was dismissed as the "lackey" of Justice William Brennan. Neither Marshall nor Thomas has ever been regarded as an "intellectual force," they say—though they are careful not to make that assertion themselves (instead invoking the frequently unattributed, unfootnoted comments of others). They note that both pairs of Justices voted together 90% of

the time, and smugly conclude, "no one has ever suggested that Scalia and Brennan followed the lead of their black brethren."

By lumping Thomas and Marshall together in this way, they make the truth more difficult to untangle. On the other hand, they insulate Marshall from justifiable criticism, twisting and mischaracterizing facts to obscure the claim's absurdity with respect to Thomas. The fact is, Marshall *did* follow Brennan, "consistently and predictably," as Supreme Court historian Henry Abraham, among others, has noted. Marshall was not the only—though probably the most reliable—Justice whom Brennan mustered to create many of the 5-4 majorities whose decisions live in the annals of judicial activism. On the other hand, Scalia, unlike the diplomat Brennan, frequently writes only for himself and, while Scalia is renowned for many things, coalition-building is not one of them. He and Thomas have come out on opposite sides of important constitutional cases, such as First Amendment protection for anonymous political speech, forfeiture of cash under the Eighth Amendment's "excessive fines" clause, and the wholly intrastate, medical use of cannabis as permitted by state law. In *Hamdi v. Rumsfeld* (2004), Scalia invoked Blackstone and English common law to argue that the president did not have the power to detain Yaser Esam Hamdi; Thomas instead analyzed the issue in light of the principles of executive power outlined in *The Federalist*, concluding that such military decisions of the commander-in-chief can't be second-guessed by the Court.

And even when Scalia and Thomas agree on the outcome, they sometimes employ separate reasoning, writing their own dissents and concurrences, as Thomas did in *United States v. Lopez* (1995), in which he called into question the Court's precedents holding that Congress can legislate not only to regulate commerce "among the several States," as the Constitution prescribes, but also in areas where there is merely a "substantial effect" on interstate commerce. Another example: although both Scalia and Thomas have dissented from the misguided line of cases holding public expressions of religion to violate the Constitution, only Thomas has explained the Establishment Clause of the First Amendment as the framers understood it, as a "federalism provision" that "protects state establishments from federal interference." Overall, Thomas is more willing than Scalia to reexamine flawed precedents and return straight to the Constitution's text and principles. In the words of one legal scholar, "when it comes to enumerated federal powers," only Thomas is "willing to put the mandate of the Constitution above his... own views of either policy or what would make a better constitution than the one enacted." No one ever said that about Thurgood Marshall.

Quiet Conviction

FORTUNATELY, ANOTHER JOURNALIST—ONE with legal training, unlike Merida and Fletcher—has taken the time to investigate the charge that Thomas merely follows Scalia. Jan Crawford Greenburg, a graduate of the University of Chicago Law School and an ABC News legal correspondent, researched the papers of the late Justice Harry Blackmun and conducted scores of interviews of the law clerks present during Thomas's early terms on the Court. Her book, *Supreme Conflict: The Inside Story of the Struggle for Control of the Supreme Court*, shatters the myth that Thomas follows Scalia's lead. It goes even deeper than the refutations already provided on this point by other authors, such as journalist Ken Fosskett, Thomas biographer Andrew Peyton Thomas (no relation), and law professor Scott Gerber. Greenburg's research reveals that Thomas was a powerful, independent voice on the Court, with his own thoughts about the Constitution and judging that diverged in significant respects from Scalia's.

For example, Greenburg reveals that at Thomas's very first conference (the meeting where the Justices exchange views, in order of seniority, on the cases argued that day), the Justices unanimously agreed in *Foucha v. Louisiana* (1992) that a Louisiana law was unconstitutional in allowing the state to confine to a mental institution an inmate found not guilty by reason of insanity, after doctors concluded he was no longer insane. But the next day, Thomas went to Chief Justice William Rehnquist and said he would be the lone dissenter. When Thomas circulated his written dissent to the Court, Rehnquist and Scalia quickly switched their votes and joined him, persuaded by his argument that Foucha had no constitutional right to be released even if it made sense as a policy matter. Justice Anthony Kennedy switched his vote, too, though he wrote his own dissent. The case, which was unanimous before Thomas spoke up, was decided 5-4.

Almost immediately, Thomas again was the sole dissenter. In *Hudson v. McMillian* (1992), a prisoner had been beaten by guards and claimed he had been subjected to "cruel and unusual punishment" in violation of the Eighth Amendment. Blackmun's notes reflect the shock in the conference at Thomas's lone position. But when Thomas circulated his dissent, arguing that a prison guard's actions, however wrong, are not the equivalent of official punishment meted out by the state, Scalia promptly switched his vote, persuaded again by the force of Thomas's reasoning.

Thomas has often been criticized for not speaking during oral argument, when other Justices interrupt each other and pepper the lawyers with questions. Incredibly, Merida and Fletcher

devote an entire chapter, "Silent Justice," to this subject, surveying at seemingly endless length everyone from high school students visiting the Supreme Court to former Reagan Solicitor General Charles Fried. Thomas has explained publicly, more than once, that there are very few questions that need to be asked once a Justice has done a thorough job reading all the briefs in the case. Almost all of the questioning is for sport among the Justices, or to put on a show for the media.

View of the Founding

IN THE CHAPTER ON MARSHALL AND THOMAS, *Supreme Discomfort* touches upon the most significant difference between the only two black Supreme Court Justices in our nation's history. Marshall believed that the Constitution "was defective from the start" because it permitted slavery and did not allow women to vote. In 1987, as America celebrated the Constitution's bicentennial, Marshall asserted that the American Founders

could not have imagined, nor would they have accepted, that the document they were drafting would one day be construed by a Supreme Court to which had been appointed a woman and the descendent of an African slave. We the people no lon-

ger enslave, but the credit does not belong to the Framers. It belongs to those who refused to acquiesce in outdated notions of liberty, justice, and equality, and who strived to better them.

In other words, the credit belongs not to the founders, but to Marshall and to others like him.

Thomas was "chief among the condemners" of Marshall's bicentennial speech, according to Merida and Fletcher. The authors defend Marshall, insisting that he "spent considerable time thinking his speech over" and "ran it by renowned historian John Hope Franklin, who... wrote the mega-best-selling history of African Americans, *From Slavery to Freedom*." But the fact that Marshall had put so much thought into the speech—that it was not an off-the-cuff statement of an aging justice—only makes clearer that Marshall detested and misunderstood the American Founding.

The condemnation of the founding as defective for its treatment of blacks and women is not unique to Marshall; perhaps its most vehement recent expressions belong to Barack Obama's pastor, Reverend Jeremiah Wright. And Obama's own campaign stump line, "We are the ones we've been waiting for," means essentially what Marshall said: the founders got

"... measuring him by the sentiment of his country, a sentiment he was bound as a statesman to consult, [Lincoln] was swift, zealous, radical, and determined."

— FREDERICK DOUGLASS, APRIL 14, 1876

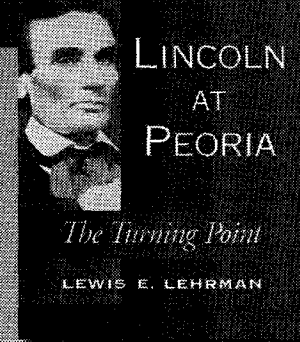
LINCOLN AT PEORIA *The Turning Point*

by Lewis E. Lehrman

Lincoln at Peoria: The Turning Point explains how Lincoln's speech at Peoria on October 16, 1854 was the turning point in the development of his antislavery campaign and his political career and thought. Here, Lincoln detailed his opposition to slavery's extension and his determination to defend America's Founding document from those who denied that the Declaration of Independence applied to black Americans.

Students of Abraham Lincoln know the canon of his major speeches — from his Lyceum Speech of 1838 to his "Final Remarks" delivered from a White House window, days before he was murdered in 1865. Less well-known are the two extraordinary speeches given at Springfield and Peoria two weeks apart in 1854. They marked Mr. Lincoln's reentry into the politics of Illinois and, as he could not know, his preparation for the Presidency in 1861. These Lincoln addresses catapulted him into the debates over slavery which dominated Illinois and national politics for the rest of the decade. Lincoln delivered the substance of these arguments several times — certainly in Springfield on October 4, 1854, for which there are only press reports. A longer version came twelve days later in Peoria. To understand President Abraham Lincoln, one must understand the Peoria speech of October 16, 1854. It forms the foundation of his politics and principles, in the 1850s and in his Presidency.

For more information visit www.LincolnAtPeoria.com



DORIS KEARNS GOODWIN
author of *Team of Rivals:
The Political Genius of
Abraham Lincoln*

"Lewis E. Lehrman does a brilliant job of dramatizing a critical moment in Lincoln's life that has never before been given the careful attention it deserves. In his book, *Lincoln at Peoria*, he has forever given the Peoria speech of 1854 its rightful place in Lincoln's story. As a result this elegant study provides fresh insight into both the growth of Abraham Lincoln as a masterful leader and the tumultuous decade of the 1850s. It is a book that deserves an honored place in the literature of our 16th President."

it wrong, but we enlightened liberals are fixing things up.

The contrast to Clarence Thomas's view could not be more stark. Thomas describes in *My Grandfather's Son* how he deliberately set out, beginning in 1986 as chairman of the EEOC, to explore with Claremont Institute scholars Ken Masugi and John Marini "the natural-law philosophy with which the Declaration of Independence, America's first founding document, is permeated." Recounting the tutorials of some 20 years ago, Thomas writes,

if all men are created equal, then no man can own another man, and we can only be governed by our consent. How, then, could a country founded on those principles have permitted slavery and segregation to exist? The answer was that it couldn't—not without being untrue to its own ideals.

If Thurgood Marshall and his ilk had had their way—if the North had refused to compromise with slavery in 1787, if the Three-Fifths Clause had never been written—no United States would have existed, and slavery could never have been put, as Lincoln said, "on the course of ultimate extinction." Thomas explains:

The Founders made the political judgment that, given the circumstances at the time, the best defense of the Constitution's principles and, ironically, the most beneficial course for the slaves themselves was to compromise with slavery while, at the same time, establishing a union that, at its root, was devoted to the principle of human equality.

Other Opinions

IN HIS NEWLY REVISED AND EXPANDED BOOK, *The Supreme Court Opinions of Clarence Thomas, 1991-2006: A Conservative's Perspective*, Brooklyn Law School professor emeritus Henry Mark Holzer provides a sympathetic, indeed reverential, take on the Justice's official oeuvre, but unfortunately the book at times appears to reflect more of Holzer's views than Thomas's. To his credit, Holzer characterizes the Constitution as implementing the Declaration, but

he makes some dubious statements that surely should not be attributed to Thomas, such as that the principles of the Declaration "were virtually unknown in the history of man." Thomas himself has discussed the natural rights of life, liberty, and property in the thought of John Locke and others upon whom the founders drew. The book does contain excerpts from many of Thomas's most constitutionally significant cases, but the choice of excerpts is narrow, and the editing diminishes them further, as does the analysis (or lack of it). The reader would be better advised simply to read Thomas's opinions for himself.

A more scholarly and complete book examining Thomas's Supreme Court opinions is Scott Gerber's *First Principles: The Jurisprudence of Clarence Thomas*. First published in 1999 as a review of Thomas's first five terms on the Court, it was expanded and republished in 2002. Gerber, a professor of law at Ohio Northern University, calls himself a "classical liberal" and undertakes a truly dispassionate study, taking pains to avoid weighing in either for or against Thomas's work. He avoids the term "Justice Thomas's judicial philosophy," which is fitting, because, as Thomas himself explains in his memoir, at the time of his nomination "I didn't have one."

Thomas still resists the idea that he has a "judicial philosophy." He just does his best to decide cases on the bases of the Constitution's text and principles and the laws enacted by the branches of government accountable to the "consent of the governed." Quoting Thomas's Senate testimony and speeches, Gerber takes the time to explain the Justice's stance, better labeled "judicial neutrality." Thomas articulated more fully, and several years earlier, the same posture of judicial neutrality for which John Roberts won so much acclaim at his own Senate confirmation hearings in 2005, when he described a judge as an "umpire" in a ball game. As Thomas put it,

If we are to be a nation of laws and not of men, judges must be impartial referees who are willing at times to defend constitutional principles from attempts by different groups, parties, or the people as a whole, to overwhelm them in the name of expediency.... A judge does not look to his or her sex or racial, social, or religious

background when deciding a case.... [A] person must attempt to exorcise himself or herself of the passions, thoughts, and emotions that fill any frail human being.... Otherwise, he is not a judge, but a legislator, for whom it is entirely appropriate to consider personal or group interests.

Gerber's balanced, scholarly study should be reprised, and soon—taking into account not only Thomas's opinions of the past five years, but also his memoir and Greenburg's research in the meantime. It would be even better if Gerber, or someone else, would produce a compendium and analysis of Thomas's opinions based not on standard legal categories such as "federalism" and "civil rights," but on the themes that emerge from his defense of the Constitution over the last 16 years on the Court: themes such as the necessity of good education for the success of the American regime of self-government, and the idea that the right to keep the property that one has earned by the sweat of one's brow is a first and fundamental freedom.

Thomas has said that the Justice's job of protecting the Constitution and the principles that underlie it "is not a game of cute phrases and glib remarks in important documents" but rather is a "deadly serious business." Whether the American experiment in self-government endures will depend, in large part, upon whether the Constitution can be preserved against the depredations of judicial activism. And that, in turn, just might depend upon whether the principles outlined in the opinions of Justice Clarence Thomas continue to persuade members of the Supreme Court and his fellow citizens.

"I've never doubted the greatness of a country in which a person like me could travel all the way from Pinpoint to Capitol Hill," Thomas writes. *My Grandfather's Son* is an amazing tale that can embolden us all as we face the hardest moments in life, and give us hope for the future of our country and her principles.

Wendy E. Long is counsel to the Judicial Confirmation Network and was a law clerk to Justice Clarence Thomas at the Supreme Court during the 1997-98 term. This essay is part of the Taube American Values Series, made possible by the Taube Family Foundation.

WHAT HOWE HATH WROUGHT

What Hath God Wrought: The Transformation of America, 1815–1848,
by Daniel Walker Howe. Oxford University Press, 928 pages, \$35

THE WORLD WAS GOING TO END THAT DAY, of that they were quite sure. The followers of William Miller were estimated to number in the hundreds of thousands, and they shared with their leader an overpowering sense that the Second Coming of Christ was at hand. October 22, 1844: that, Miller determined, would be the Last Day. As the weeks and hours wound down, his followers frantically prepared to meet their Maker, reconciling their differences, returning ill-gotten money, vacating lawsuits, and leaving crops to rot in the fields. As dusk fell on that fateful Tuesday evening, Millerites across the nation were said to have donned white robes and climbed to the tops of roofs, hills, and haystacks. From these vantage points, the thinking went, their ascent to heaven would be unimpeded.

Needless to say, daybreak came, and the entire episode quickly became known as the “Great Disappointment.” (Disciples of Miller nevertheless reconstituted into what we know today as the Seventh-day Adventist Church.) Though the devotion of Miller’s followers was admittedly extreme, it was not terribly unusual. The early 19th century witnessed the Second Great Awakening, an explosion of religious activity that shattered the irenic deism of the American Founding. Revivals rocked the country, with millions converted in heady mass gatherings that could last as long as a week. Methodists, Baptists, and Disciples of Christ evangelized aggressively, and quickly outstripped the more established Congregationalists, Presbyterians, and Episcopalians. New movements abounded: Mormonism, Shakerism, Swedenborgianism, Transcendentalism, Universalism, Spiritualism.

This was one side of the young republic: pious, restive, utopian, apocalyptic. But there was another side.

On May 24, 1844, five months before the Great Disappointment, an excited group of men crowded into the chambers of the United States Supreme Court. A 53-year-old painter and professor named Samuel F.B. Morse hunched over a compact device of his own design. Once he was

ready, he tapped a long handle, sending a series of long and short electric pulses racing along a wire. Moments later, the exact sequence was returned from Baltimore.

The staccato exchange of dots and dashes represented a revolution in human communication. For millennia, information had traveled only as far as eyesight allowed, and only as fast as horses could gallop or ships could sail. The postmaster general still relied upon communication technologies that, save for the printing press, would have been largely familiar to Julius Caesar.

Morse did not, to be sure, invent the first electric telegraph—there were already some 50 different designs in existence—but he neverthe-

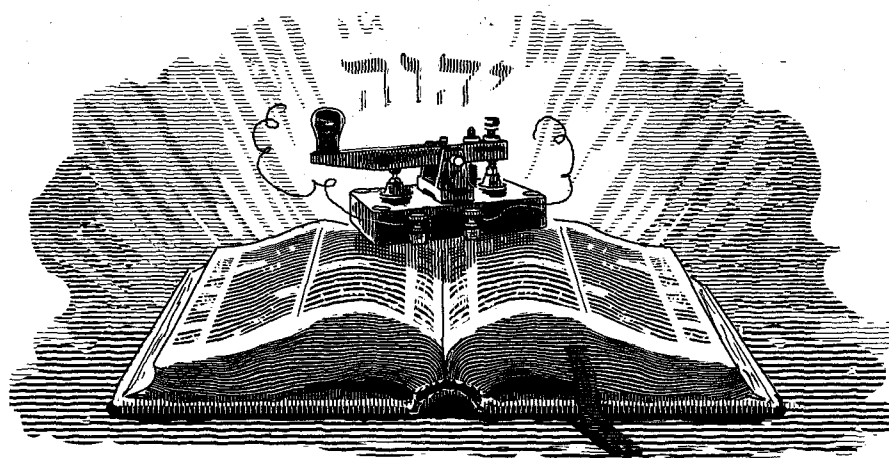
statesmen, nobody seemed to think it passing strange that the first message conveyed by cable was taken from the Book of Numbers: “What Hath God Wrought.”

DANIEL WALKER HOWE TAKES THE TITLE of his new Pulitzer Prize-winning history from Morse. *What Hath God Wrought* examines the United States from 1815 to 1848, weaving the young nation’s chiasm and calculation into a seamless narrative. For Howe, the Rhodes Professor of American History, emeritus, at Oxford University, and an emeritus professor of history at UCLA, it is the crowning achievement of a lifetime devoted to studying the era.

What Hath God Wrought is the most recent installment of the Oxford History of the United States, a series initially edited by the late C. Vann Woodward and intended to serve as the definitive modern multi-volume history of the country. The series began brilliantly with *The Glorious Cause* (1982), Robert Middlekauff’s account of the Revolutionary War. It then topped itself with *Battle Cry of Freedom* (1988) by James McPherson, widely regarded as the finest available single-volume history of the Civil War. Since then, the

series has disappointed, adding three critically acclaimed—but frankly lackluster—histories of the 20th century. With Howe’s contribution, there is reason to believe that the Oxford History may yet redeem its original promise.

Much of Middlekauff’s and McPherson’s success can be attributed to their subject matter. Wartime history has an internal logic that guides and paces the narrative; its great challenge, in fact, is maintaining a sense of the contingency of events, the sense among participants that the outcome is still unknown. The historian who writes about times of peace faces the opposite problem. Contingency abounds, requiring him to discover some overarching theme to provide a sense of narrative coherence. That task is especially difficult for an era in which both William Miller and Samuel Morse are representative figures.



less catalyzed the revolution by creating a system that was simple, durable, and cost-effective. For its part, the American government—despite Morse’s wishes, and in marked contrast to European nations—declined to take ownership of the new technology. Instead, it left the telegraph’s development to the country’s promiscuously fecund private sector. Within a decade, telegraph cables blanketed the eastern states; by 1861, they spanned the breadth of the continent, binding together the new nation, perhaps every bit as tightly as did the older, mystic chords of memory.

The electric telegraph revealed that other side of early 19th-century America: calculating, rational, pragmatic. But even here, with Americans at their most hardheaded and practical, the spirituality of the age broke through. Among this assembly of learned scientists and worldly

One possible approach to these years is political. Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr.'s masterpiece *The Age of Jackson* (1945) depicts the period as a time when the common people defended their rights against the encroachments of wealth and privilege. Andrew Jackson is hailed as the representative figure of the age, a living exemplar of the new nation's rough-hewn egalitarianism. The notion still has wide purchase, and was expressed most recently, but without Schlesinger's deft literary touch, in Sean Wilentz's *The Rise of American Democracy* (2005).

Another approach is economic. Charles Sellers's influential *The Market Revolution* (1991) explores at length and in detail how a rural republic of largely self-sufficient farmers was forced to rapidly shift towards the production of goods for a global market. The disruption called into question many of the American Revolution's assumptions, and the expansion of widespread commercial capitalism, Sellers argues, created something quite new, different, and unpleasant in the United States.

Howe does not deny the importance of either politics or economics, but he does question the conventional scholarly approaches to the early republic. The supposed egalitarianism of the age took little account, to say the least, of women, Indians, or African-Americans, and the concept of "Jacksonian democracy" ascribes to Jackson and the Democratic Party achievements (like universal white male suffrage) that were already well-advanced by the 1820s. As for the "market revolution," a considerable market economy already existed by the 18th century, the author notes, and most Americans welcomed the opportunity to buy and sell goods in vastly enlarged arenas.

HOWE FOCUSES INSTEAD ON THE TECHNOLOGICAL developments that led to "The Transformation of America," as his subtitle puts it. "During the thirty-three years that began in 1815," he writes, "there would be greater strides in the improvement of communication than had taken place in all previous centuries. This revolution, with its attendant political and economic consequences, would be a driving force in the history of the era." The electric telegraph paired with the steam engine would breed twin revolutions in communication and transportation which were ultimately to overthrow the tyranny of distance, making practicable the "manifest destiny" that would spread the borders of the United States from the Rio Grande to Puget Sound.

None of which is to suggest that technology is the book's principal subject. Howe surveys the entirety of the American experience, drawing in equal measure from political, diplomatic, and military history on the one hand and, social, economic, and cultural history on the other. Never

does he lose sight of the country's underlying unease: a people that loudly proclaimed the Enlightenment and yet trembled at the approaching millennium.

That unease had many causes, but one of them was surely political. With the untapped riches of a vast continent awaiting exploitation, the United States seemed poised for greatness. Yet somehow the experiment still seemed curiously tenuous, with various regions, classes, and races eyeing each other suspiciously. Howe pays close and subtle attention to the period's politics, which saw the emergence of several new and distinctive elements of American political culture.

The collapse of the Federalist Party in the 1810s led to a period of one-party rule dubbed the "Era of Good Feelings." It was not to last. When none of the four candidates vying for the presidency in 1824 gained a majority of Electoral College votes, the election was thrown into the House of Representatives. The House chose John Quincy Adams over Andrew Jackson, even though Jackson had received more popular votes. Enraged at the outcome, Jackson's followers formed the Democratic Party, determined to see their candidate take the White House. Their victory in 1828 gave rise a few years later to the Whig Party, deeply suspicious of "King Andrew." The founders deplored the prospect of such a stable two-party framework, which nevertheless endures largely unchanged to this day.

Alongside the newly institutionalized partisanship emerged a new type of American political leader. James Monroe was the last president to run unopposed for reelection—and, tellingly, the last to wear knee breeches, buckled shoes, powdered wig, and tricornered hat. With the close of the Era of Good Feelings, Americans would neither expect an aristocrat in the White House nor accept an uncontested election. Martin Van Buren, Jackson's campaign manager and eventual successor, pioneered a new party politics and an insistence that, in order to represent the people, a leader should come from the people. Henceforth American politicians would have to tread carefully, appearing simultaneously folksy and refined, common and distinguished, ordinary and extraordinary.

As the last of the founders faded from the scene (James Madison died in 1836), the United States continued to grapple with the Constitution's full implications. Some of those controversies were decided to lasting effect. Although Jackson's freewheeling use of the presidential veto and introduction of the "spoils system" (which allowed the president to restaff the executive branch upon taking office) were met with howls of protest from Congress, both have come to be recognized as essential executive prerogatives. Despite Democratic opposition, President John Tyler claimed full (rather than "acting") privileges after William Henry

Harrison's death, to the benefit of subsequent presidential successions.

Perhaps the most innovative constitutional thinker of the age was John C. Calhoun, who along with Henry Clay and Daniel Webster was part of the Senate's celebrated "Great Triumvirate." An early nationalist who later became a strident advocate of states' rights, Calhoun developed the theory of the concurrent majority, according to which collective action was predicated upon the unanimous approval of all significant minorities. It was perhaps the most brilliant defense of the Articles of Confederation ever written—and a bold rejection of the majority-rule principle of the Constitution. Somewhat perversely, only an age that deeply understood American constitutionalism could produce a thinker capable of so thoroughly rejecting it.

HOWE IS AN ENGAGING WRITER, WHOSE lively prose bursts with telling anecdotes. It is easy, for instance, to get lost in abstractions when explaining the mindset of the American Whigs. But Howe cuts straight to the heart of the matter when he describes the daily exercise regimen of John Quincy Adams, who would wake every morning at dawn throughout his presidency to swim naked in the Potomac. On June 13, 1825, his rowboat capsized, and Quincy Adams, still dressed, nearly drowned. He noted in his diary that the "incident gave me a humiliating lesson and solemn warning not to trifle with danger." But the relentlessly self-improving Whig returned to the water the very next day, to swim for "1 hour 12 minutes."

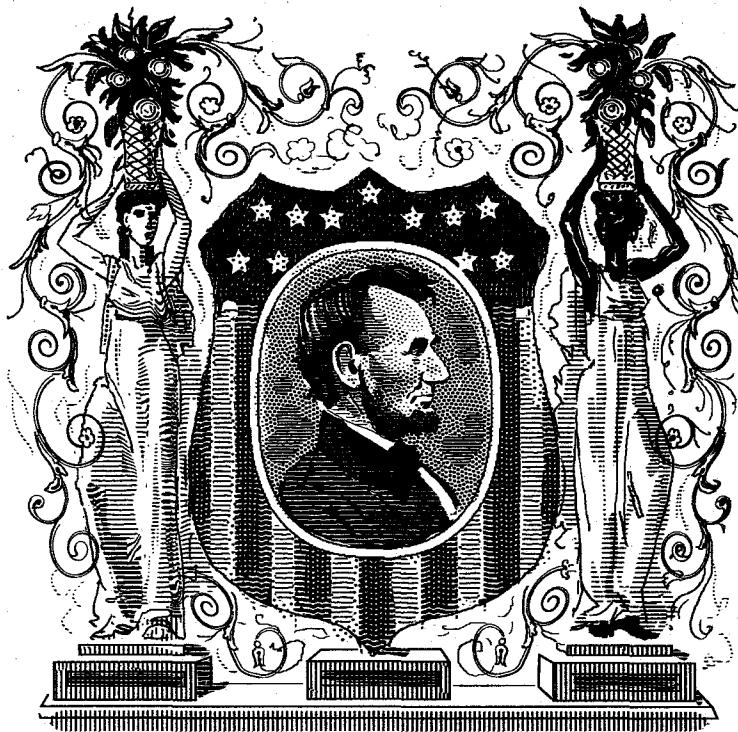
Quincy Adams occupies a central role in the narrative—indeed, the book is dedicated to his memory. To Howe, he represents what was most admirable about American Whiggery: its fairness, modesty, and diligence. Against Schlesinger, Sellers, and Wilentz—all of whom champion the Democrats—Howe seeks to vindicate the dutiful, sober moderation of the upwardly mobile Whigs. (Indulging in a bit of counterfactual speculation, Howe even proposes—incorrectly, I think—that had Henry Clay defeated James Polk in the presidential contest of 1844, the nation "would probably have avoided the Civil War.") In that regard, the book represents the fulfillment of the project Howe began with *The Political Culture of the American Whigs* (1979).

I suspect that, decades hence, what Arthur Schlesinger was to Jackson and the Democrats, Daniel Walker Howe will be to Quincy Adams and the Whigs. For now, those who wish to understand the world of William Miller and Samuel Morse can hardly do better than to read and consider *What Hath God Wrought*—and marvel at what Howe hath wrought.

Christopher Levenick is a writer living in Alexandria, Virginia.

WASHING MUD FROM MARBLE

Vindicating Lincoln: Defending the Politics of Our Greatest President,
by Thomas L. Krannawitter. Rowman & Littlefield, 376 pages, \$24.95



PICK ANY MAJOR FIGURE IN AMERICAN CONSERVATIVE thought since 1945, and you will generally find the attitude toward Abraham Lincoln to be surprisingly ambivalent. Take Willmoore Kendall, one of the sainted names of modern conservatism, as an example: according to Kendall, Lincoln used the Declaration of Independence to demolish the Constitution in the name of promoting equality. "What Lincoln did...was to falsify the facts of history," he argued, "and to do so in a way that precisely *confuses* our self-understanding as a people." Or take Gottfried Dietze, a libertarian, who saw Lincoln's appeal to the Declaration as a pretense which allowed him to demote the Constitution to a mere piece of framery, so that Lincoln would be free to pursue dictatorial glory as president. Lincoln, he said, was "a democratic Machiavelian whose latent desire to achieve immortality broke forth at the first opportunity offered by... the Civil War." Or if not lusting after glory exactly, allows Dietze, Lincoln used the pursuit of equality as an excuse for granting himself "unprecedented and virtually dictatorial powers as president," and tore down the restraints of the Constitution so that he could satisfy a kind of political Oedipus complex.

A good deal of this ambivalence stems from the long history of agrarian resistance to modern industrial capitalism, a resistance whose

apostles have at various times included Thomas Jefferson, John Taylor of Caroline, John C. Calhoun, William Jennings Bryan, Allan Tate, John Crowe Ransom, and now Wendell Berry. From their pens has arisen the mythopoetic chant of the land, the land, and the land, as though loam and offal possessed moral qualities. Given that Lincoln got off the land as soon as he turned 21, became a lawyer (those menacing enforcers of contracts and mortgages), and made war upon a Confederacy whose principal product was the most valuable agricultural commodity in the 19th century—one can understand why anyone with visions of rural piety floating through his head probably has little reason to admire Lincoln.

A MORE VIOLENT REASON FOR THIS DISLIKE grows out of the near-sighted conclusion that because the Confederacy justified its secession from the federal system on the ground of state rights, Lincoln must necessarily have represented an agent of centralized "big government," and therefore a camel's nose that every good conservative needs to whack the moment it pokes through the political tent flaps. And it is true that, under Lincoln's administration, the volume of federal spending and congressional micro-management increased in a way that would not be seen again until World War I. But this is

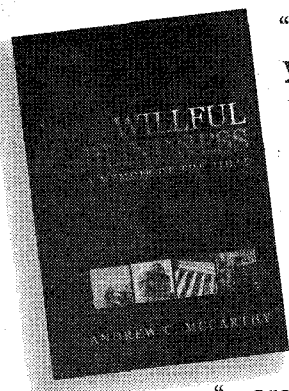
an accusation which rarely takes into account the utterly unprecedented demands of a four-year civil war, or the fact that, once the war ended in 1865, swollen federal bureaucracy quickly shrank back to its pre-1861 dimensions. (The military force used to administer Reconstruction, often offered as an additional count against the overmighty federal government in Lincoln's era, never amounted to more than 17,000 men.) Southerners might have claimed to be conservative for trying to conserve state rights (although Alexander Stephens, the vice-president of the Confederacy, thought that the Confederate Constitution was an innovation, "the first, in the history of the world," and a step beyond the "sandy foundation" of the old Constitution because it incorporated the "great, philosophical, and moral truth" of black racial inferiority.) But Lincoln was also struggling to be a conservative by preserving the Union from self-destruction; and that, in turn, was key to preserving popular government in the face of what had become a profoundly reactionary political age. What was being tested by "this great civil war" was not merely the constitutional technicalities of federalism, but the entire project of "any nation so conceived and so dedicated." Was democracy doomed to incessant rounds of self-destruction? Were people really born to be ridden by those born booted and spurred? All the evidence from 1804 onwards said yes; only

WILLFUL BLINDNESS

A MEMOIR OF THE JIHAD

By Andrew C. McCarthy

ISBN: 978-1-59403-213-4 | \$25.95



"Read this book and you'll understand why this war is a war, and why we have no choice but to fight it and win it."

— Rush Limbaugh

"...arguably the most stirring, brilliantly written, and devastatingly honest book on terrorism that has ever been published..."

— Steven Emerson
Author of the bestseller
American Jihad

IN THE SHADOW OF PROGRESS

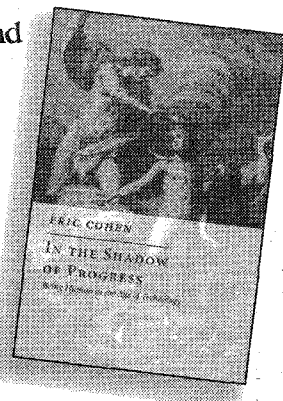
BEING HUMAN IN THE AGE OF TECHNOLOGY

By Eric Cohen

ISBN: 978-1-59403-208-0 | \$21.95

"In this profound and beautifully written book, Eric Cohen, a precociously wise new commentator on the relation of science and ethics, illuminates the deepest meanings of the new age of biotechnology. A must-read for anyone who wants to understand where science may be taking us, and why it matters — in short, a book for everyone."

— Leon R. Kass, M.D.
Addie Clark Harding Professor
The Committee on Social Thought
The University of Chicago



e ENCOUNTER
BOOKS

At bookstores everywhere
or call 800-786-3839
www.encounterbooks.com

the American democracy said *no*, and now this democracy was teetering on the brink, too.

But underlying both of these criticisms of Lincoln is a more inexplicable factor—namely, the failure of conservatives, even after half a century, to reconcile themselves to the civil rights movement. Lincoln may have been dead for four-score-and-seven years when *Brown v. Board of Education* (1954) inaugurated the "second Reconstruction," but many conservatives who were dubious about the second Reconstruction's use of federal power—especially federal judicial power—as the principal lever for bringing down Jim Crow could hardly help suspecting that the template for federal intervention in the 1950s had been copied from Lincoln's in the "first Reconstruction." I think this view of the relationship between the "first" and "second" Reconstructions pays insufficient attention to the distinctive ways in which the latter was shaped by Progressivism, while the former was a campaign to introduce free-market and free-labor capitalism into a society built around racial caste. And it is true that there were many things wrong with the civil rights movement—its dismissal of the rule of law as a white man's invention, the domino effect of racial egalitarianism toward egalitarian absurdity, the invention of victimhood and identity politics. But it was right about one very big thing, and that was the vicious and deliberate way in which white Southerners trampled the sacredness of American citizenship into the mud, while whites everywhere else turned a conveniently blind eye. *Civis romanus est* brought down Gaius Verres; *civis americanus est* ought to have protected Emmett Till, James Meredith, and Medgar Evers, but it didn't. Any conservative who wonders why blacks' perceived self-interest veers so often in the direction of power rather than law has only to consult the many ways in which, for a century after the Civil War, the "rule of law" was used as an excuse for the routine subornation of natural rights and civil justice.

FOR THOMAS L. KRANNAWITTER, AN ASSISTANT professor of government at Hillsdale College, to "vindicate" Lincoln, as he does in *Vindicating Lincoln: Defending the Politics of Our Greatest President*, will certainly raise behind some fevered brows the question whether Krannawitter deserves to be called a conservative at all. If the vigor with which he mounts this defense is any indication, those doubts will accumulate into a thundercloud. "Lincoln understood," Krannawitter says in his introduction, "as few of his contemporaries did and few scholars do today, that government by consent of the governed rests upon the idea of human equality." This will not be greeted happily by anyone who laughs off equality as a charming illusion, or who locks arms around race, language, eth-

nicity, and religion as factors so essential as to make citizenship a mere technical formality, or who imagines that certain primitives cannot be expected to understand anything about politics except the boot in the butt.

The nine chapters that make up this book can almost stand as separate essays, or even as nine responses corresponding to the most familiar indictments hurled at Lincoln these days. They include such over-burned chestnuts as:

Was Lincoln a racist? This is usually thought of as the accusation of the mad-dog Left. But as Krannawitter shows, it is just as much the accusation of conservative neo-Confederates who seem to hope that the guilt of the Confederacy in enslaving innocent fellow-countrymen—and in many cases, given widespread plantation miscegenation, their own flesh and blood—or in contemplating treason and war against their country can be overshadowed by fastening the yoke of hypocrisy around Lincoln. And is there not something odd in finding an eminent left-wing hater of the American past (Howard Zinn) mouthing the same argument about Lincoln's "hypocrisy" on race as an eminent libertarian hater of Lincoln (Thomas DiLorenzo)?

Was Lincoln, so to speak, pro-choice? Not, replies Krannawitter, if we take at all seriously Lincoln's objections to Stephen A. Douglas's doctrine of popular sovereignty. By reducing slavery to a matter of choice—to a referendum in which white voters decided purely by procedural majoritarianism whether an outrage on natural law could be committed—Douglas performed exactly the same intellectual operation as those who today howl for "choice." In Douglas's understanding, democracy was a kind of end in itself, with the *vox populi* as its only compass. Lincoln, by contrast, argued that democracy was a means—a wonderful and admirable means, but still a means—toward protecting and implementing the natural rights enumerated in the Declaration and shared by every human being, black or white, in the womb or out of it.

Who was right about the founding, Taney or Lincoln? Lincoln argued that equality was the central proposition of the Declaration, and that the Constitution existed as the most prudent means imaginable for implementing that proposition. This has provided bales of fodder for leftist critics, who find the Constitution hopelessly riddled with pro-slavery assumptions; but it has also served the interests of conservatives who suspect that invocations of Jeffersonian *égalité* will spark a reign of terror, or at least an unprecedented amount of state intervention in order to enforce equality. The curiosity here is that the most egregious examples of state intervention in American history have been undertaken on behalf of *inegalitarianism*—from the Three-Fifths

Clause to the "separate-but-equal" farce of *Plessy v. Ferguson* (1896), to, in more recent times, racial quota systems. And it's worth remembering that the most radical example of raw judicial power in American history, Roger Brooke Taney's *Dred Scott v. Sanford* (1857), was on behalf of the most radical form of inequality.

Do states possess a constitutional right of secession? If one were inclined to worry that the singular threat to liberty comes from over-mighty central government, then one may think favorably of secession as an emergency defense against the monster State. Actually, the framers of the Constitution were just as afraid that liberty was in danger from small-minded provincial oligarchies as from centralized tyranny. Hamilton, for instance, feared the "prospect of a number of petty states, with the appearance only of union, jarring, jealous and perverse, without any determined direction, fluctuating and unhappy at home, weak and insignificant by their dissensions in the eyes of other nations." As Krannawitter demonstrates, the constitutional "right" of secession is a myth, based on bad history and worse motives. Conservative history, I think, can do better.

The Lincoln Krannawitter vindicates is a man conservative in a wholly unconservative way, or at least not in the Eeyore-like way too many conservatives embrace. For like Bright and Cobden in England, and Guizot, Bastiat, and Tocqueville in France, Lincoln thought of liberty as equality of opportunity, as the de-privileging of birth and inherited status, as the empowerment of the productive, the commercial, and the dili-

gent. In contrast to the agrarians' vision, liberty offered a future to be striven after, not a Golden Age to be mourned. The dreamers of Golden Ages hoped that time could be made to stand still, that social mobility and economic dynamism could be made to appear ugly and craven, that (in the words of the prince of Victorian Toryism, Benjamin Disraeli) "All is race; there is no other truth." Lincoln was a conservative, Krannawitter argues, but a conservative who believed profoundly in a future of social mobility and self-improvement, to which nothing was more contradictory than a world constructed according to fixed hierarchies of race and slavery. Progressive politics (so-called) compliments itself on looking to the future; in fact, it is promoting a restoration of patrician feudalism, and its hostility to free-market economics differs not at all from what Richard Cobden called "the mock philanthropy of the Tory landowners." No wonder Lincoln kept a portrait of John Bright, Cobden's ally, in his office.

FOR A CENTURY AND MORE AFTER HIS death, Abraham Lincoln was extolled as the greatest example of what American democracy offered in a statesman. But just as a vast skepticism about the value of democracy has darkened the American mind over the past generation, so has a skepticism about the value of Abraham Lincoln, and it has become fashionable for democracy's despisers to cast Lincoln as a racist, a wrecker of the Constitution, a military despot, a capitalist tool, and a great fixer rather than a Great Emancipator. Nothing, however,

surpasses *Vindicating Lincoln* in exploding the addled libels of the Lincoln-haters. One by one, in his nine chapters, Krannawitter patiently—and sometimes hilariously—disassembles the myths of Lincoln-the-tyrant, Lincoln-the-racist, and Lincoln-the-betrayer, and once more restores the epic gleam of Lincoln the defender of natural right, the Declaration of Independence, the Constitution, and the Union. It is a good thing, too, for he is right to warn that "if Americans come to believe that the President reputed to be the greatest was in truth a scoundrel unworthy of respect," then they will ineluctably surrender to "the mistaken idea that there is nothing noble or beautiful about politics." The result will be political cynicism and a withdrawal from the public square of citizenship into "our private pursuits and private interests." Who then "will hold our government accountable to Constitutional and moral standards"? Who, indeed? And then conservatives will have become the chief instrument of the nightmare they complain about. Conservative philosophy, I think, can do better. And it can start with *Vindicating Lincoln*.

Allen C. Guelzo is the Henry R. Luce Professor of the Civil War Era at Gettysburg College, and the winner of the Lincoln Prize in 2000 for *Abraham Lincoln: Redeemer President* (Eerdmans Publishing) and in 2005 for *Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation: The End of Slavery in America* (Simon & Schuster). His most recent book is *Lincoln and Douglas: The Debates that Defined America* (Simon & Schuster).

MAN OF A THOUSAND FACES

Homer's The Iliad and The Odyssey: A Biography, by Alberto Manguel.
Atlantic Monthly Press, 288 pages, \$19.95



IT IS SAID THAT THE YOUNG ALCIBIADES, VISITING a grammar school around 430 B.C., asked the teacher for a volume of Homer and, hearing there was none, struck the hapless teacher and left. Ancient geographers like Strabo thought to learn their art from the blind bard; Stoics studied what they considered Homer's didactic allegories. Military commanders pored over his lays so as to avoid Agamemnon's errors and mimic Odysseus's guile. Socrates called Homer the "best and most divine" of poets, and Plato's dialogues, for all their censure, refer to him, by one estimate, 331 times. Plutarch claims that Aristotle himself prepared an edition of the *Iliad* for his pupil Alexander, who kept the book "with his dagger under his pillow, declaring that he esteemed it a perfect portable treasure of all military virtue and knowledge." A 2nd-century B.C. marble relief depicts Homer as Father of Humankind, crowned by Time and Space themselves.

Alberto Manguel's slim "biography" is a literary history of Homer's epics, half criticism, half *Britannica* entry. In each of 22 short chapters, averaging ten pages apiece, he examines an angle of the Homeric phenomenon: the question of his existence; his reception by Greek philosophers; his heirs Virgil and Dante; the agonies of St. Jerome and Augustine of Hippo in reconciling him with Scripture; the excavation of Troy; his role in French debates between *anciens* and *modernes*; and his lessons on war and peace. Manguel flits about in time, but the progression is roughly chronological, from Homer's heroic age to our insistently anti-heroic one. The epics, thought to have been composed in the 8th century, have had few rivals in the inspiration of pedantry: an an-

cient scholar named Demetrius of Scepsis amplified 62 lines from the *Iliad's* Catalogue of Ships into 30 volumes. But Manguel, a critic, novelist, and translator born in Argentina and now living in France, writes with intelligence and curiosity. For a man of letters who has edited 23 anthologies and is reputed to possess a library of 30,000 volumes, he mostly avoids ostentation.

Manguel's intent is to show that, for over 2,500 years, countless members of the species have found "in these stories of war in time and travel in space...the experience of every human struggle and every human displacement." The *Iliad* and *Odyssey*, which can be thought to represent the two great metaphors of life, a battle and a journey, are the "books which, more than any others, have fed the imagination of the Western world." In the 8th century A.D., Byzantine schoolchildren were still expected to have much of the *Iliad* by heart. Six hundred years later, during the Renaissance, Homer remained the cornerstone of every ambitious library. A friend sent Petrarch a Greek manuscript of Homer, which the father of humanism treasured despite ignorance of the language. "Your Homer lies mute by my side," Petrarch wrote his friend, "while I am deaf by his, and often I have kissed him saying: 'Great man, how I wish I could hear your words!'" In 1580, Montaigne declared Homer one of the three "most excellent of men," alongside Alexander and the Theban general Epaminondas. Dr. Johnson observed in 1765 that "nation after nation, and century after century, has been able to do little more than transpose his incidents, new-name his characters, and para-

phrase his sentiments." Even today, it is possible that Homer the poet is better known than Homer the cartoon character.

Votaries of the "man of a thousand faces," in Manguel's play on Christopher Marlowe's phrase, constitute a gallery of literature's great and lesser figures, from Herodotus to Racine to Tennyson to Derek Walcott. Manguel discusses works that but for Homer wouldn't exist, from the plays of Aeschylus (who claimed his labors were mere "slices from the great banquets of Homer") to the Arabic Sinbad tales, from Milton's *Paradise Lost* to Joyce's *Ulysses*; he assigns equal space to obscurities like Jean Giraudoux's *La Guerre de Troie n'aura pas lieu* (1935) and Timothy Findley's *Famous Last Words* (1981). But even immortal Homer has critics. Diderot's *Encyclopédie* sniffed at him as a relic of barbaric antiquity. Speaking for roughly 75 generations of schoolchildren, Churchill observed in *My Early Life* (1930), "Mr. Gladstone read Homer for fun, which I thought served him right."

HOMER IS GREEK TO ME, AS TO MOST, which can make the selection of a translation nearly as important as the decision to read him in the first place. Manguel nominates two English versions for acclaim: Alexander Pope's (*Iliad*, 1715-1720; *Odyssey*, 1725-26) and the late Robert Fagles's (*Iliad*, 1990; *Odyssey*, 1996), using the latter for his citations. As Manguel says, Fagles is rightly "praised for his accuracy and modern ring"; others (like me) prefer Pope's music and nobility. Fagles himself served as associate editor in

preparing the definitive Twickenham Edition of Pope's Homer, masterpieces he declared "impossible to equal." Compare the rough-hewn Fagles, then the stately Pope, rendering the passage in *Iliad*, Book XVI, that depicts Achilles and his tribesmen, whose withdrawal from the fighting had been disastrous to the Greeks, girding themselves at long last to rejoin the war:

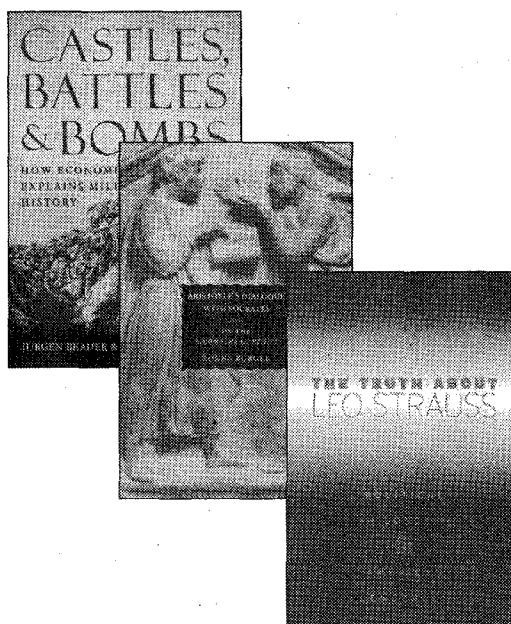
Prince Achilles, ranging his ranks of Myrmidons,
arrayed them along the shelters, all in armor.
Hungry as wolves that rend and bolt raw flesh,
hearts filled with battle-frenzy that never dies—
off of the cliffs, ripping apart some big antlered stag
they gorge on the kill till all their jaws drip red with blood,
then down in a pack they lope to a pooling, dark spring,
their lean sharp tongues lapping the water's surface,
belching bloody meat, but the fury, never shaken,
builds inside their chests though their glutton bellies burst—
so wild the Myrmidon captains, Myrmidon field commanders
swarming round Achilles' dauntless friend-in-arms.

Achilles speeds from tent to tent, and warms
His hardy Myrmidons to blood and arms.
All breathing death, around their chief they stand,
A grim, terrific, formidable band:
Grim as voracious wolves that seek the springs
When scalding thirst their burning bowels wrings
(When some tall stag, fresh-slaughtered in the wood,
Has drenched their wide, insatiate throats with blood)
To the black fount they rush, a hideous throng,
With paunch distended, and with lolling tongue,
Fire fills their eye, their black jaws belch the gore,
And gorged with slaughter, still they thirst for more.
Like furious rushed the Myrmidonian crew,
Such their dread strength, and such their deathful view.

IN RECOUNTING DISPUTES OVER HOMER'S EXISTENCE, the nature of his instruction, or his compatibility with monotheism, Manguel maintains an amused neutrality. But on occasion he asserts himself. When Émile Zola calls Homer's heroes "nothing but gang bosses," for example, Manguel labors to show the complexity of Homer's portrait of humanity and the sorrows of war. Homer can bathe his warriors in gore and fury, but they also appear in the most touching domestic poses. Here from *Iliad*, Book VI, is the scene in which Hector bids farewell to his infant son, as his wife Andromache looks on, before he returns to the great fray outside Troy's walls (again, Fagles, then Pope). In all poetry, writes Pope, there "never was a finer piece of painting than this":

In the same breath, shining Hector reached down
for his son—but the boy recoiled,
cringing against his nurse's full breast,
screaming out at the sight of his own father,
terrified by the flashing bronze, the horsehair crest,

NEW FROM CHICAGO



Castles, Battles, and Bombs

How Economics Explains
Military History

Jurgen Brauer and Hubert van Tuyl

"My skepticism was relieved by the preface, my expectations enhanced by the first chapter, my confidence assured by the second. This study is serious, creative, important. As an economist I am happy to see economics so professionally applied to illuminate major decisions in the history of warfare."—Thomas C. Schelling, winner of the 2005 Nobel Prize in Economics
Cloth \$29.00

Aristotle's Dialogue with Socrates

On the *Nicomachean Ethics*

Ronna Burger

"This is the best book I have read on Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics*. It is so well crafted that reading it is like reading the *Ethics* itself, in that it provides an education in ethical matters that does justice to all sides of the issues."
—Mary P. Nichols, Baylor University
Cloth \$35.00

Now in Paperback

The Truth about Leo Strauss

Political Philosophy and American
Democracy

Catherine and Michael Zuckert

"The late émigré philosopher Leo Strauss has achieved a great deal of posthumous notoriety, demonized by the Left as the cynical spiritual father of imperialist U.S. policies. Strauss's thought deserves better—and gets it, in *The Truth about Leo Strauss*."—*National Review*

Paper \$19.00

The University of Chicago Press
www.press.uchicago.edu

The State of Disunion

Regional Sources of
Modern American
Partisanship

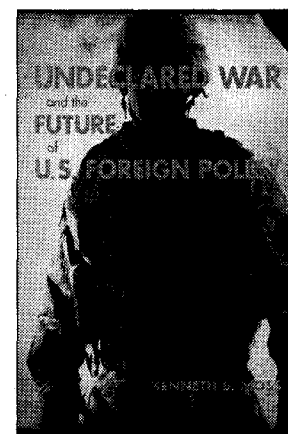
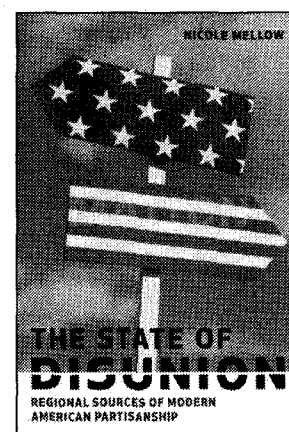
Nicole Mellow

"This important book spans American history, economics, and culture to explain why the nation splits into blue versus

red states. Nicole Mellow suggests that the regional differences may be growing and warns us about the consequences for our democracy. Wise, ambitious, elegant, alarming, and highly recommended."

—James A. Morone, Brown University

\$25.00 paperback



Undeclared War and the Future of U.S. Foreign Policy

Kenneth B. Moss

"An exceptionally thoughtful, probing, insightful study that adds much to our understanding of

modern warfare, both its practical application and its constitutional legitimacy."

—Louis Fisher, author of *Presidential War Power*

Woodrow Wilson Center Press

\$22.95 paperback

The Absence of Grand Strategy

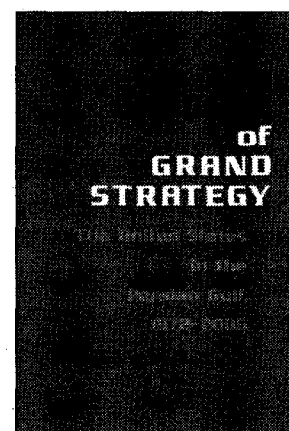
The United States
in the Persian Gulf,
1972–2005

Steve A. Yetiv

"This book makes an original contribution and is a welcome relief from much of the polemical writing on the subject of American foreign policy. It will be essential reading for those in securities studies and international relations."

—Patrick James, Center for International Studies,
University of Southern California

\$25.00 paperback



THE JOHNS HOPKINS UNIVERSITY PRESS
1-800-537-5487 • www.press.jhu.edu

the great ridge of the helmet nodding, bristling terror—
 so it struck his eyes. And his loving father laughed,
 his mother laughed as well, and glorious Hector,
 quickly lifting the helmet from his head,
 set it down on the ground, fiery in the sunlight,
 and raising his son he kissed him, tossed him in his arms,
 lifting a prayer to Zeus and the other deathless gods:
 "Zeus, all you immortals! Grant this boy, my son,
 may be like me, first in glory among the Trojans,
 strong and brave like me, and rule all Troy in power
 and one day let them say, 'He is a better man than his father!'—
 ...So Hector prayed
 and placed his son in the arms of his loving wife.
 Andromache pressed the child to her scented breast,
 smiling through her tears.

Thus having spoke, th' illustrious chief of Troy
 Stretched his fond arms to clasp the lovely boy.
 The babe clung crying to his nurse's breast,
 Scared at the dazzling helm, the nodding crest.
 With secret pleasure each fond parent smiled,
 And Hector hastened to relieve his child,
 The glitt'ring terrors from his brow unbound,
 And placed the beaming helmet on the ground.
 Then kissed the child, and lifting high in air,
 Thus to the Gods preferred a father's prayer.
 "O thou! whose glory fills th' etherial throne,

And all ye deathless pow'rs! protect my son!
 Grant him, like me, to purchase just renown,
 To guard the Trojans, to defend the crown,
 Against his country's foes the war to wage,
 And rise the Hector of the future age!
 So when triumphant from successful toils,
 Of heroes slain he bears the reeking spoils,
 While host may hail him with deserved acclaim,
 And say, 'This chief transcends his father's fame':
 ...He spoke, and fondly gazing on her charms,
 Restored the pleasing burden to her arms
 Soft on her fragrant breast the babe she laid,
 Hushed to repose, and with a smile surveyed.
 The trouble pleasure soon chastised by Fear,
 She mingled with the smile a tender tear.

Homer famously suffered the occasional nod, but Manguel, apparently wide awake, threatens in some chapters to put his readers fast asleep. When his march through literature arrives at Goethe, Schiller, and the German Romantics, things begin to get heady. Then Nietzsche swaggers onstage, mind-boggling as ever. He is followed by Freud, who psychoanalyzes Achilles' subconscious and deciphers Homeric symbolism. Enter Carl Jung to obscure things further by clarifying Freud. By this point Manguel is producing sentences like the following:

For Jung, this meant that Homer unconsciously identified with Nature, creating by analogy an association between the subject poet and his thematic object, lending it his creative power and representing it in a certain way because that is the way it shapes itself with him.

The reader yearns for the clarity of the non-Teutonic chapters and recalls, with improved understanding, the epigraph gracing one of them, from Swift: "As learned commentators view / In Homer more than Homer knew." But taken all in all, the book shows why Homer will continue to mesmerize. By the end, the reader understands Manguel's awe:

How astonishing that, in a language we no longer know precisely how to pronounce, a poet or various poets whose faces and characters we cannot conceive, who lived in a society of whose customs and beliefs we have but a very vague idea, described for us our own lives today, with every secret happiness and every hidden sin.

Joseph Tartakovsky is an associate editor of the Claremont Review of Books.

PURITANS AND CAVALIERS

War and Peace, by Leo Tolstoy, translated by Richard Pevear and Larissa Volokhonsky.
Alfred A. Knopf, 1,296 pages, \$37



IN THE INTRODUCTION TO HIS TRANSLATION of *Don Quixote*, John Rutherford writes that translators are either cavaliers or puritans. Cavaliers translate freely; puritans stress fidelity to the text. Richard Pevear and Larissa Volokhonsky, the newest translators of *War and Peace*, are puritans. They seek to capture “the balance, rhythm, and above all the repetitiveness” of Tolstoy’s style. The result is as close to Tolstoy’s original as one can get without reading Russian. Anthony Briggs, who translated *War and Peace* in 2005, is an unabashed cavalier who believes that every generation or two needs to retranslate the classics into contemporary prose. Like Rutherford, Briggs wanted to avoid a “mistaken attitude of reverence for the original artist...[by translators] who can only ever aspire to produce a pale shadow of the original.” Briggs aimed for English that occurs naturally in its context and now sounds appropriate, and he produced a fluid, enjoyable, colloquial—and definitely modern—British version. There are now more than 5,500 pages of *War and Peace* in print in English and at least four translations from which to choose. The appearance of a new translation gives us a chance to revisit and contrast the several versions available.

Pevear and Volokhonsky, an American and Russian married couple, work so closely together that they consider themselves “one translator who has the luck to be a native speaker of two languages.” Beginning in 1990 with Dos-

toevsky’s *The Brothers Karamazov* (awarded a PEN prize for translation), they have translated many works of classic Russian fiction, including all of Dostoyevsky’s major novels, Gogol, Chekhov, Bulgakov, and Tolstoy—15 volumes to date, with Tolstoy’s short fiction in the works. Their translation of *Anna Karenina* has sold nearly a million copies.

Pevear and Volokhonsky are prolific, fast, and accurate. They deliberately “undertranslate,” considering their work “a dialogue between two languages.” They seek “the enrichment of the translator’s own language, rather than the imposition of his language on the original.” Like Tolstoy himself, they are obsessive wordsmiths, constantly revising, seeking precision. Tolstoy’s wife copied out seven drafts of *War and Peace*. When they were apart, Tolstoy would send her telegrams with word changes. Pevear and Volokhonsky’s work habits sound similar. “We work separately at first. Larissa produces a complete draft, following the original almost word by word, with many marginal comments and observations. From that, plus the original Russian, I make my own complete draft. Then we work closely together to arrive at a third draft, on which we make our ‘final’ revisions.”

IN ADDITION TO PEVEAR-VOLOKHONSKY AND Briggs, the Constance Garnett translation from 1904 is available to today’s readers, published by Modern Library Classics. Gar-

nett gave English readers their first taste of the Russians, and her fans recount with relish their encounters with her translations, usually several novels devoured in great gulps. This intrepid Englishwoman translated over seventy volumes of Russian prose at the turn of the 20th century, ruining her eyesight but opening the world of the Russians to writers like Hemingway and Faulkner. While most translators agree Garnett was devoted to the text, they criticize her for homogenizing Tolstoy and Dostoyevsky, producing what Volokhonsky calls “Tolstoyevsky.” “Dostoyevsky is hilarious,” says Volokhonsky, “yet heartbreaking at the same time. Garnett left out the hilarity.”

Louise and Aylmer Maude translated *War and Peace* in 1923. An Englishman, Aylmer went to study in Russia in 1874 and lived among the British community in Moscow, becoming director of the Anglo-Russian Carpet Company. The Maudes were disciples of Tolstoy, visiting his estate, Yasnaya Polyana, several times before he died in 1910. Tolstoy authorized Aylmer to write his biography and to translate his works into English. Louise translated much of the fiction, including *War and Peace* and *Resurrection*, while Aylmer concentrated on the philosophical treatises, but like Pevear and Volokhonsky, they worked as a team. According to Tolstoy’s biographer, Henri Troyat, Tolstoy spoke of Aylmer on his deathbed. Louise and Aylmer lived briefly in

THE LIBRARY of AMERICA FOUNDERS COLLECTION

WASHINGTON: WRITINGS

John Rhodehamel, editor

"After reading this book, one knows him as never before."
Parade Magazine
1149 pages • \$40

JEFFERSON: WRITINGS

Merrill D. Peterson, editor

The most comprehensive one-volume selection ever, complete with
Notes on the State of Virginia, the *Autobiography*, and 287 letters.
1600 pages • \$35

MADISON: WRITINGS

Jack N. Rakove, editor

"An invaluable sampling from the work of
our most original political thinker."
The Wall Street Journal
966 pages • \$40

HAMILTON: WRITINGS

Joanne Freeman, editor

"A generous and intelligent anthology."
The New York Times Book Review
1108 pages • \$40

FRANKLIN

- I. Silence Dogood, The Busy-Body, & Early Writings
- II. Autobiography, Poor Richard, & Later Writings

J. A. Leo Lemay, editor

"The indispensable edition of Frankliniana."
American Studies International
I. 823 pages • \$30 II. 816 pages • \$30

PAINE: COLLECTED WRITINGS

Eric Foner, editor

"All of the germinal work of the forgotten founding father."
Christopher Hitchens
906 pages • \$35

THE DEBATE ON THE CONSTITUTION

*Federalist and Antifederalist Speeches, Articles, and
Letters During the Struggle over Ratification*

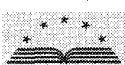
- I. September 1787 to February 1788
- II. January to August 1788

Bernard Bailyn, editor

"For Americans this is Shakespeare, and more. Not only is it
wonderful writing, it is wonderful thinking."
Nina Totenberg, NPR
II. 1214 pages • \$35 I. 1175 pages • \$35

FORTHCOMING

John Adams: Revolutionary Writings Gordon Wood, editor
John Marshall: Writings Charles Hobson, editor



THE LIBRARY of AMERICA
Classic Writers. Classic Books.

Distributed by Penguin Group (USA), Inc. www.loa.org

the Purleigh Community in Essex, an English utopian commune set up along Tolstoyan principles of universal brotherhood. Their faithful translation, which the Maudes revised in 1933, remains available in a Norton Critical Edition, loved by graduate students for its scholarly essays and bibliography.

Along with these several translations—Pevear-Volokhonsky, Maude, and Briggs—many are still devoted to a Penguin translation by Rosemary Edmonds, since superseded by Briggs. Another edition, translated by Andrew Bromfield, published in 2007 by Ecco, claims to be the original version of *War and Peace*, never before published. (It appears to be an early draft that Tolstoy discarded.)

"LANGUAGE CHANGES," WRITES BRIGGS, "and, without worshiping modernity for its own sake, publishers recognize the need to accommodate new readers by using phrasing more closely attuned to their way of speaking." "Tolstoy's literary style has its faults," he adds, "such as undue repetition, grammatical inaccuracy and some sentences of excessive length." The cavalier Briggs provides synonyms to cure the repetitions, breaks up Tolstoy's run-on sentences, and adds modern colloquialisms. In contrast, Pevear and Volokhonsky take the exacting approach. A brief comparison illustrates their differences. *War and Peace* opens in 1805 with a soirée in Anna Pavlovna Scherer's St. Petersburg drawing room, where courtiers, society matrons, and diplomats discuss Napoleon's latest efforts to dominate Europe. Anna Pavlovna confers with Prince Vassily Kuragin, a man of "high rank and influence," proposing that he marry off his "prodigal son" to an heiress whose father is likely to die soon and leave her very rich. The idea appeals to the prince immensely, but he is far too wily to show his interest.

Briggs renders the scene as follows:

Prince Vasily made no reply, but being quick on the uptake and good at remembering things—qualities that came naturally to the denizens of high society—he gave a slight nod to show that he had noted her comment and was considering it.

Contrast the Pevear-Volokhonsky translation:

Prince Vassily did not reply, though, with the quickness of grasp and memory characteristic of society people, he showed by a nod of the head that he had taken this information into account.

Briggs eases the reader into the world of 19th-century Russian society by making it seem contemporary, but the Pevear-Volokhonsky version

will appeal to the reader who wonders what Tolstoy actually wrote and wishes he could go back to the original Russian. No one in 1805 would have said "quick on the uptake." Puritans might agree with Henry James that "easy writing makes hard reading." Pevear and Volokhonsky think that updating Tolstoy's language in this way binds him to a specific time and place, while they set him clearly in the 19th century.

War and Peace has the luxury of leisure. It unfolds slowly over eight years with an epilogue seven years later. The family saga of births, proposals, marriages, and deaths takes place during the Napoleonic Wars, with scenes of descriptive power. Interspersed with meditations on history and historical happenings, Tolstoy describes a wolf hunt, a sleigh ride, a Masonic initiation, three major battles and numerous skirmishes, a peasant meal, a nobleman's feast, a comet's appearance, an audience with Napoleon, a duel, life at court, life in the country, life in the regiment, each scene a "small stylistic moment of fresh perception."

NARRATIVE AND RHETORICAL TECHNIQUES hold the novel together. According to Pevear, "Tolstoy once boasted that in writing *War and Peace* he had used every rhetorical device of the old Latin grammarians, which means they are not there by chance." Accordingly, Pevear and Volokhonsky keep Tolstoy's piled-up clauses, endless sentences, and interplay of Russian and French. They reject the search for synonyms that sends other translators to the thesaurus, instead capturing the cadence of Tolstoy's prose by repeating his phrases over and over.

Compare their translation with those of Maude, Garnett, and Briggs. First, Pevear-Volokhonsky:

At the beginning of winter, Prince Nikolai Andreich Bolkonsky came to Moscow with his daughter. *Because* of his past, *because* of his intelligence and originality, and especially *because* of the weakening just then of the raptures over the reign of Alexander I, and *because* of the anti-French and patriotic tendencies which reigned at that time in Moscow, Prince Nikolai Andreich at once became an object of special deference among the Muscovites and the center of Moscow opposition to the government. [Emphasis added.]

Maude:

At the beginning of winter Prince Nicholas Bolkonsky and his daughter moved to Moscow. At that time enthusiasm for the Emperor Alexander's regime had weakened, and a patriotic and anti-French ten-

dency prevailed there, and this together with his past and his intellect and his originality, at once made Prince Nicholas Bolkonsky an object of particular respect to the Muscovites, and the center of the Moscow opposition to the government.

Garnett:

At the beginning of the winter Prince Nikolay Andreitch Bolkonsky and his daughter moved to Moscow. His past, his intellect and originality, and still more the falling off at about that time of the popular enthusiasm for the rule of the Tsar Alexander and the anti-French and patriotic sentiments then prevailing at Moscow, all contributed to make Prince Nikolay Andreitch at once an object of peculiar veneration and the centre of the Moscow opposition to the government.

Briggs:

At the beginning of the winter old Prince Bolkonsky and his daughter moved to Moscow. He had become an object of special veneration in Moscow because of his past achievements, his powerful intellect and unusual character, and this, together with the current decline in the popularity of Tsar Alexander's regime, which coincided with a surge in anti-French sentiment and Russian patriotism, now made him the natural centre of opposition to the government.

All four translations get the point across, and each has its strengths. Pevear-Volokhonsky, by keeping Tolstoy's clauses intact, are the most accurate. They give equal weight to the four reasons why Prince Bolkonsky has become suddenly popular in Moscow: his past military exploits; his eccentricities, now considered originality; disenchantment with Tsar Alexander; and the new mood of Russian patriotism in the capital. Garnett achieves close to the same effect by the phrase "all contributed to make Prince Nikolay Andreitch...an object of peculiar veneration." Pevear and Volokhonsky call him "an object of special deference"; Maude, "an object of particular respect"; and Briggs, "an object of special veneration." Briggs adds words to make the paragraph clearer, calling Prince Nikolai Andreich Bolkonsky the "old Prince Bolkonsky," to distinguish him from his son Andrey and to avoid using the prince's name and patronymic, a problem that flummoxes so many first-time readers in English.

What should a translator do with the French that makes up 2% of *War and Peace*? Tolstoy

himself was ambivalent, putting it in, taking it out in a later edition, and finally restoring it. Most Russian readers in Tolstoy's day would have understood French and caught the irony of a Russian aristocracy speaking and writing French among themselves, even as they were fighting a war with France. Tolstoy offers some amusing moments when a Russian heiress, as a patriotic gesture, institutes a game of forfeits for every French word spoken in conversation. But English readers have never had the same widespread fluency in French, and most translators remove it. Garnett, the Maudes, and Briggs translate it into English, sometimes losing a nuance. For example, after a long stay in the country, Natasha Rostov goes to the Moscow opera. Tolstoy's heroine is emblematic of everything beautiful in the Russian nature, as Orlando Figes has shown in *Natasha's Dance* (2003). When Natasha loses her bearings at the opera, she starts speaking French, signifying not just a linguistic but a moral change, as the influence of aristocratic society starts to corrupt her. Translating the French makes unquestionably for a smoother, uninterrupted, narrative flow, but at a cost of subtlety. Pevear and Volokhonsky, the most faithful to Tolstoy's original intent, retain all of the French with footnoted translations.

BECAUSE WAR AND PEACE IS SO GROUNDED in fact, following "the vast movement of men first from west to east and then from east to west," any edition that does not include maps does the reader a disservice. Tolstoy researched the battles in *War and Peace* extensively, poring over French and Russian maps and plans, reading memoirs, and, almost finished with the novel in summer 1867, spending two days at Borodino studying the terrain. He drew his own detailed map of the battlefield, versions of which are included in Maude and Briggs. They also contain maps of the major battles, Napoleon's campaign in and out of Russia, and of the City of Moscow in 1812. The reader simply cannot get the full benefit of the three battles—Schongrabben, Austerlitz, and Borodino—without the sense of place that Tolstoy wanted to supply his readers. A central part of the novel takes place at Bald Hills, the Bolkonsky estate located outside Smolensk, on the very road that Napoleon's troops took to Moscow. The Pevear-Volokhonsky translation has no maps, a shortcoming that should be remedied in a future printing. But Pevear and Volokhonsky have created an extensive historical index of nearly 200 names—from the well-known Alexander I, emperor of Russia during the Napoleonic Wars, to the obscure Prince Zubov, the last of Catherine the Great's lovers.

Tolstoy's fictional and real characters fight in

the three main battles. Nikolai Rostov enlists in 1805 and is tested at Schongrabben; Andrei Bolkonsky is wounded the same year at Austerlitz; and seven years later, Pierre Bezukhov, Tolstoy's questing hero, wanders straight into the battle of Borodino. When Pierre stumbles around the battlefield, getting in everyone's way, it is clear that Tolstoy is describing a real location. The barrow that Pierre went up on was that famous place (later known to the Russians as the battery of the barrow, or the Raevsky battery, and to the French as *la grande redoute*, *la fatale redoute*, *la redoute du centre*) around which tens of thousands of men were brought down, and which the French considered the most important point of the position.

My copy of the Maude translation was published in 1942 by Simon & Schuster for a reprint series called *Inner Sanctum Books for Victory*. Appearing at the height of the Second World War, it contains a map of Europe showing Napoleon's invasion and retreat from Russia—overlaid with a nearly identical map of Hitler's assault in 1941-42, a dramatic reminder of the importance of geography.

TOLSTOY'S VIEWS OF "MEN, WAR, AND HISTORY and their interrelationships" are often criticized. His theory of history—that there is no theory of history, no grand strategy, and no great men, only events "fortuitous and unforeseen by either side"—will be debated as long as people read *War and Peace*. In his introduction to it, Aylmer Maude, who loved Tolstoy, quotes E.M. Forster's soaring vision of the novel's achievement:

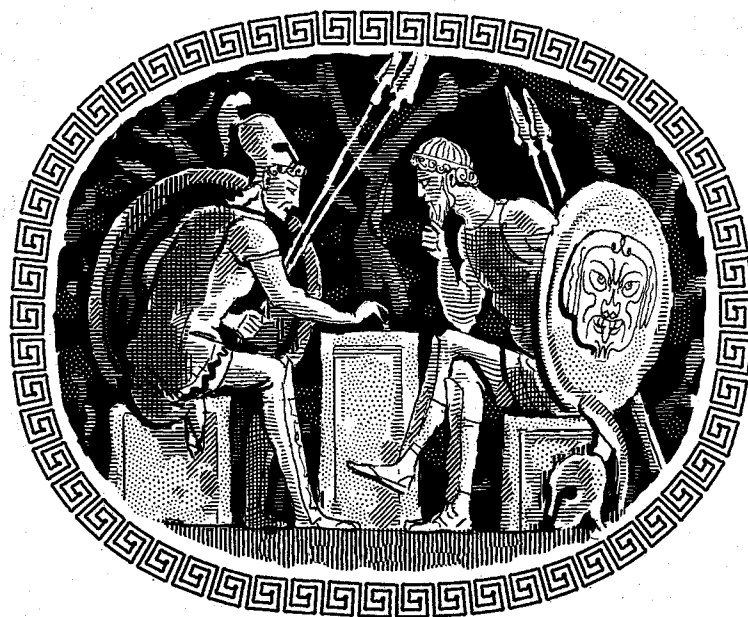
Why is *War and Peace* not depressing? Probably because it has expanded over space as well as time, and the sense of space, until it terrifies us, is exhilarating and leaves behind it an effect like music. After one has read *War and Peace* for a bit, great chords begin to sound...they come from the immense area of Russia over which episodes and characters have been scattered, from the sum total of bridges, frozen rivers, forests, roads, gardens, fields, which accumulate grandeur and sonority after we have passed them.

Each of these translations allows the reader to experience the grandeur of *War and Peace*. One is tempted to agree with a young woman, Mary Landon Baker, who told the Maudes, "I should like to live my life over again, in order to have once again the pleasure of reading *War and Peace* for the first time!"

Lesley Herrmann is Executive Director of the Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History.

YIN AND YANG

Dualisms: The Agons of the Modern World, by Ricardo J. Quinones.
University of Toronto Press, 472 pages, \$65



DUALISMS STAND AT THE VERY BEGINNING of Western ways of viewing the world. Aristotle bears witness to this by recording in his *Metaphysics* the Pythagorean Table of Opposites, the contraries that are the complementary principles of all that is: good and bad, rest and motion, one and many, and so on. Ricardo Quinones's *Dualisms* is an embodied version of such oppositions as they determine the modern European West.

This impressive book has three aspects. One is to give definition to the ever-evolving dualisms by displaying them incarnate in four pairs of human antagonists: Erasmus and Luther, Voltaire and Rousseau, Turgenev and Dostoyevsky, Sartre and Camus. As these encompass modernity in time so they cover modern Europe in space, from France to Russia. The dualisms, so concretely alive in these persons, are rooted in their times, places, and temperaments, but are also perennial in significance.

Right away a question arises: does America lack these great embattled opposites? Or is it, perhaps even more generally, that people with Anglo-Saxon attitudes antagonize each other in different modes? One of the great virtues of this big book is that it stimulates large questions of this sort.

The second aspect of *Dualisms* is its torrential supply of learning—textual, biographical, historical—and here I must enter a regret. A book so large and multifarious deserved a much

more detailed index to help the reference-seeking reader recover spots of special interest. For the lay reader—and this is a book to be read across the disciplines—this second aspect is an education in the small facts that illumine large scenes. For example, people who knew merely that “Voltaire” is a pen-name might delight in the fact that it is self-descriptive: Arouet knew himself as a man of intellectual volts, quick turns—a fact that would figure in his duels with Rousseau.

The volume's third and most intellectually engaging aspect is the business of delineating these fundamental dualisms and enforcing Quinones's thesis:

[T]hese dualisms become so dominant, and eclipse others of their time, because they...expose and represent perennial tensions within Western culture and the Western psyche.

He surely succeeds in proving this proposition. In fact the multifarious dualisms are reducible to one, which is then shaped by various circumstances: the age-old difference between those whose first need is to know themselves, to be, so to speak, self-possessed, but who are by that fact somewhat inhibited in action; and those who are carried away by a great passion, who are as it were other-possessed, and who are by that very submission empowered to prevail.

BUT QUINONES, AN EMERITUS PROFESSOR of English at Claremont McKenna College, also expresses a broader fact of our philosophical tradition, that it is *dialectical*, one long “agon” (or, in kinder, gentler terms, conversation) of opposing views whose bearers are individuals. Think of those two initiations of the dialectic of Being as flux versus stasis, the near-contemporaries Heraclitus and Parmenides, both alive at the turn of the 5th century B.C., or of their epigones, contemporaries in the century just past, Wittgenstein and Heidegger, the philosophers respectively of language as spoken by people and language as self-revelatory.

This tradition, this “handing-down,” does indeed, as its name implies, generally establish itself successively over time. Quinones, however, has chosen to exemplify it more through the acutely personal confrontations of its contemporaneous protagonists, so that the agon, the contest, becomes an agony, a tribulation. Here again the book helps to formulate a problem: granted that every thesis spawns an antithesis, are there in this drama characters, perhaps even the greatest, who are singular and universal at once, who comprise and transcend the antagonisms? Or to descend to a more immediate question, are Quinones's pairs in actual agonistic equilibrium?

My sense is that Quinones himself doesn't think so. Nor would one expect it, for the issues that so fiercely embattle them can scarcely leave

the scholarly observer disengaged. He does his heroic best to treat each side equally, but he is fully aware of the brute fact that the representatives of the moderate or self-possessed side of the dualisms are men of lesser endowment; the "genius," the deep radicality, religious or social, is all on the other side. Erasmus, Voltaire, Turgenev are—very high-grade—lightweights, who run off before the Future with their tails between their legs, defeated by the personal potency and the historical instrumentality of their agonistic nemeses, Luther, Rousseau, Dostoyevsky. (The case is somewhat different for the "hybridity" of Sartre and Camus, whose dualism "cross-breeds.")

One consequence of what I sense to be Quinones's predisposition is that, for all of his descriptive copiousness, some long-range historical consequences, wreaked by the more potent partner in the pair, are suppressed. We are not reminded that Luther, in some respects a great bully, was so spiritually delicate about works (including very bad ones) spoiling the purity of faith that four centuries later a Prussian-Lutheran officer corps could not bring itself actually to act against evil; or that sensitive Rousseau made it acceptable to denigrate civilization and to repose the will of all in the will of one, permissions that surely contributed to making Hitler and Hitlerism respectable for a time. Quinones ends the book by emphatically distinguishing the "daemonic" members of these pairs from fascists or radical fanatics, but what of the demons' spawn? Aren't the usherers-in of the Future at least partly responsible for its actuality? Indeed, the book raises yet another perplexity: wouldn't Europe have been a better place if the self-controlled thinkers had won out?

BUT LEAVING CONSEQUENCES ASIDE, WHAT exactly are these dualisms that Quinones struggles to work out? They are not bald logical contradictions of the "A and not-A" type, but rather more concrete contrarities, extremes in an element of sameness, the poles of a spectrum such as are black and white in the chart of pigments. His types are the "writer of consciousness" and his opposite, the "daemonic writer." The former is witty, wily, accommodating, even temporizing; the latter visionary, self-exceeding, even extremist. Each actual figure has his individual penumbra of temperamental characteristics. One fascinating consequence of this typology is that rationality, which conservatives tend to decry as radical and thus revolutionary,

is here pitted as the weak but sweetly reasonable defense of a valuable tradition against a powerfully subversive passion for innovation.

These dualisms lead to yin and yang-like involvements—journalistic encounters, epistolary explanations, public polemics—that have great pathos, intensified by the fact that the issues and often the positions are the same among the pairs, and that the men of enlightened compromise are confounded by a defeat that casts them in a light in which they cannot recognize themselves. Quinones depicts the pathos of the losers very vividly, which is particularly welcome because most readers will be more familiar with the "daemons," the "singularities," Luther, Rousseau, and Dostoyevsky. (Voltaire in fact writes to Rousseau: "true merit consists not in being singular, but in being reasonable.") The defeated cannot understand how their "good sense and practical wisdom," their standing by "the combined wisdom of the ages," should leave them so vulnerable to sidelining by these demonic energies.

I think the receptive reader might well be torn when it comes to the unavoidable side-taking. Who would prefer the experience of endeavoring to laugh at Erasmus's learned Latin jokes to that of being reluctantly carried along by Luther's tremendous German vituperations, or of plodding through Voltaire's elegant witticisms to that of being stopped short by Rousseau's paradoxical depths? And yet—the lesser talents might teach the more livable lesson. It seems to me that the decision might finally depend on the route by which we come to our modernity: back from the future to see beginnings or up from the past to see endings.

Quinones pits not only the authors but also their fictional characters against each other. Thus Turgenev's Bazarov in *Fathers and Sons*, a "wild" man whose uncompromisingly destructive dogma brought the word "nihilism" into circulation, is to his reader Dostoyevsky a forerunner of the future, but to his own author, the gentle Westernizer Turgenev who is—here Quinones quotes the critic Pisarev—"looking at him from the past," he is a man to shrink from so as to avoid "the slightest contact with the bouquet of Bazarovism." Dostoyevsky's Stavrogin in *The Demons*, on the other hand, whose very name, "Cross-horn," signals him as savior and demon at once and who, laden with crimes of flesh and spirit, is adulated by a band of terroristic lost souls—this morally ambiguous hero clearly has his author's compassionate commitment. And whatever a reader may think of the dreadful

possibilities he projects, Stavrogin stays sharply delineated in the memory when Bagarov has faded into a label—for his creator temporized in the making of him.

In the center of the book, Quinones inserts a chapter about his predecessors in the dualistic pitting of pairs, among whom the most obvious, Plutarch, is not really to be counted, since in his *Parallel Lives* he compares Greeks with Romans, characters whose lives don't actually cross. Instead, Quinones cites two writers active at the end of the 18th century: one Antonino Valsecchi, "who first brings out the major interests of dualistic comparisons"; and Friedrich Schiller, whose essay "On Naïve and Sentimental Poetry" Quinones regards as establishing the pattern for such dominating 19th-century dualisms as Nietzsche's Apollonian-Dionysian opposition.

THE EPILOGUE SETS OUT PERSUASIVELY ways in which the consideration of dualism can help to rescue the humanities from their present state of crisis and allow them to emerge as "arbiters of moral choice." These agons affirm the past and present vitality of dualistic truth-seeking: first, they confirm the presence of the past, because these opposites are still alive and still recognizable as our heritage. Second, we learn to engage with the authors in their totality, including their moments of doubt. (Quinones here mentions only the daemons, not the consciousness-men). Third, they induce rational debate and thus clarification.

Might I add a fourth, a reflexive, way? Dualisms, and the book named from them, invite pondering this significant dilemma: types, the most indispensable tools for marshalling human affairs are, it seems, by and large either so abstract as to be true of nothing or so qualified as to be self-confuting. Thus in an eloquent final appreciation of "the beauty of genuine dualisms," Quinones accords to each man of consciousness the accolade of having "turned his face toward the future" along with his daemonic partner—but that is just what each of them was previously said not to have done or to have done ineffectively; it is precisely what distinguished him from his radical other. Nonetheless, it seems to me that this little dose of self-contradiction is itself an invitation to the sort of revivifying thinking Quinones is so admirably intent on fostering.

Eva Brann is a tutor at St. John's College, Annapolis.



Book Review by Algis Valiunas

THE CRITIC WHO SOMETIMES EXISTS

Literary Essays and Reviews of the 1920s & 30s, by Edmund Wilson.
Library of America, 958 pages, \$40

Literary Essays and Reviews of the 1930s & 40s, by Edmund Wilson.
Library of America, 979 pages, \$40



THE LIBRARY OF AMERICA HAS HONORED Edmund Wilson (1895-1972) by publishing two volumes of his literary criticism from the 1920s, '30s, and '40s. The edition comprises the collections *The Shores of Light: A Literary Chronicle of the Twenties and Thirties*, *Axel's Castle: A Study in the Imaginative Literature of 1870-1930*, *The Triple Thinkers*, *The Wound and the Bow*, *Classics and Commercials: A Literary Chronicle of the Forties*, and a dozen previously uncollected reviews. These essays and reviews take in poets from Pope to Tennyson to Eliot to Edna St. Vincent Millay; novelists from Dickens to Flaubert to Proust to Hemingway; playwrights from Shakespeare to Eugene O'Neill to Thornton Wilder; critics from Samuel Johnson to H.L. Mencken; and miscellaneous subjects from Houdini to burlesque shows, books of etiquette, and horror novels.

And it is high time too that Wilson be included in the national literary roll of honor. The Library of America was Wilson's brainchild: in the 1968 essay "The Fruits of the MLA," collected in *The Devils and Canon Barham*, he printed a letter he had sent in 1962 to assorted literary eminences and President Kennedy in which he proposed "bringing out in a complete and compact form the principal American classics," after the French example of the *Éditions de la Pléiade*. Wilson wound up getting both less and more than he argued for. He envisioned an edition of Francis Parkman, for instance, that included "his novel and his book on rose culture"; the Library, which has published over 200 books since 1979, has brought out three handsome volumes of Parkman's histories, but the novel is not included and the subject of roses never comes up. Nor is the omission such a bad thing. What is

not such a good thing is the Library's tasteless inclusion, in the name of postmodern expansiveness, of such trivia and grotesquery as the works of George S. Kaufman, H.P. Lovecraft, and James M. Cain, all of which Wilson dismissed as low, wretched stuff, bound to offend a palate of any discrimination.

DISCRIMINATION USED TO BE A CRITIC'S most valuable stock in trade, the touchstone of his own quality or lack thereof. Multiculturalist gourmandise, the eagerness to take in as much as the belly can hold—and the more alien the fare the better, however insipid or scorching it may be—has pretty well put an end to that. Wilson's own intellectual omnivorousness sadly contributed to the demise of the critical excellence he once represented; he spat out a lot of dubious matter after a taste, but he

swallowed plenty. He wrote laudatory studies of Zúñi, Haitian, Iroquois, and Canadian culture, and burrowed like a bookworm through the vast literature of the American Civil War to produce *Patriotic Gore* (1962), fascinating on Lincoln and Oliver Wendell Holmes, Jr., less so on Charlotte Forten and Hinton R. Helper. He couldn't help himself; he wanted to know everything, and once he launched into a subject he saw it through to the end.

In some of his best essays, however, Wilson is a master of fine distinctions, probing for weakness here, admiring a subtle strength there, sometimes reversing at the last moment, and with an unexpected bravura flourish, what appeared to be a sharp and definitive judgment against a writer. Walking slowly and carefully around the work of John Steinbeck, for instance, in the 1941 piece "The Boys in the Back Room," he identifies the essential flaw that keeps *The Grapes of Wrath* from really living:

The characters of *The Grapes of Wrath* are animated and put through their paces rather than brought to life; they are like excellent character actors giving very conscientious performances in a fairly well-written play. Their dialect is well managed, but they always sound a little stagy; and, in spite of Mr. Steinbeck's efforts to make them figure as heroic human symbols, one cannot help feeling that these Okies, too, do not exist for him quite seriously as people.

Then after some 4,000 well-chosen words of similar chastisement, Wilson rounds off the essay with a praiseful conclusion that mitigates the harsh judgment but does not commute the sentence: "Yet there remains behind the journalism, the theatricalism and the tricks of his other books a mind which does seem first-rate in its unpanicky scrutiny of life." Failures of artistry do not negate the fundamental quality of Steinbeck's intelligence, which looks upon the hard world with robust and virile fearlessness. Intellectual excellence and moral virtue are of a piece in the persons Wilson most esteems, and Steinbeck may not be a great writer but he is such a person of substance. Yet even so there remains a moral blot against Steinbeck in Wilson's assessment of his literary weakness: the characters Steinbeck creates are not quite real even to him, and that unreality is a transgression not only against literature but against life. To turn human beings into portentous symbols of the proletarian spirit buckled by capitalist oppression substitutes a political idea for living truth.

Steinbeck's guiding political idea was not much different from Wilson's, so it is a measure of Wilson's scrupulousness as a literary critic that he faults Steinbeck for bending reality to

ideology. In the 1929 essay "Dos Passos and the Social Revolution," Wilson lights into a writer he regards far more highly than he does Steinbeck for allowing his politics, grounded in fatuous sentiment, to color his work the most garish red:

Might it not, we ask ourselves, be possible—have we not, in fact, seen it occur—for a writer to hold Dos Passos's political opinions and yet not depict our middle-class republic as a place where no birds sing, no flowers bloom and where the very air is almost unbreathable?

Such an extravagant animus toward the ordinary life of a decent society has its hidden springs, Wilson suggests, in some psychic darkness,

some deeply buried streak of hysteria of which his misapplied resentments represent the aggressive side. And from the moment we suspect the processes by which he has arrived at his political ideas, the ideas themselves become suspect.

This is a penetrating strike at the vitals of socialist ideology—although the insight is transferable to any blinkered political zealotry—and it is rare to see from a man of the Left so stark and unflattering an analysis of the origins of class hatred.

IF NEUROTIC BLINDNESS, MORBID LOATHING, and ferocious adherence to an idea are the symptoms of intellectual swamp fever, common sense and disinterested pellucidity are the marks of a healthy intelligence. The 19th-century English comic novelist Thomas Love Peacock, who lampooned the fashionable exorbitant ideas of his time, represents for Wilson a species of moral heroism. In the 1947 essay "The Musical Glasses of Peacock," Wilson writes,

It was a godsend that in the early nineteenth century, with its seraphic utopianisms, its attitudinizing anti-social romanticisms and its cannibalistic materialisms, one man who had the intelligence to understand and the aesthetic sensibility to appreciate the new movements and the new techniques that were going to people's heads, should have been able to apply to their extravagances a kind of classical common sense; and Peacock's value...should by no means be less today, at a time when extreme ideas are being violently put into practice.

It would likely have given Peacock a good laugh to be thus promoted as antidote to the Red Army, but he would not have disavowed the compliment.

Wilson's admiration for the man who stands apart from the hell-bent passions of his time reaches its apex in his visit to the aged George Santayana, who had lived through the Second World War in a convent cell in Rome. Santayana is the philosopher who has virtually removed himself from history, the storm of blood that overwhelms ordinary men and seems to them the very essence of life. In the post-war travel book *Europe Without Baedeker* (1947), Wilson honors the wizened sage:

It was at the same time respect-inspiring and disturbing to one's wartime preoccupations to find this little husk of a man, at once so ascetic and so cheerful, sustaining at eighty-one so steady an intellectual energy, inhabiting a convent cell, among the layers of historical debris that composed the substance of Rome, intact and unmoved by the tides of invasion and revolution that had been brawling back and forth around him; and when he talked about these outside occurrences, it was as if he attached them to history: the war was an event like another which would presently belong to the past.

Although Santayana has no idea who Wilson is—an American soldier had coaxed the philosopher into signing some copies of his books, and the soldier had sent a signed copy to Wilson, who thought it came from Santayana and thereupon looked him up—when he sees Wilson is interested he speaks readily about the matters that concern him, after the manner of "the sage who has made it his business to meet and to reflect on all kinds of men and who will talk about the purpose and practice of life with anyone who likes to discuss them." Wilson's tribute to the reclusive thinker is one of the finest passages in his work,

WHEN IT COMES TO WILSON'S OWN reflections on the purpose and practice of life, however, something essential is wanting. Wilson's is a fundamentally political intelligence with no real use for metaphysical or religious questions, which he settled to his everlasting satisfaction when he was a prep school student. In the memorial to a beloved schoolmaster, "Mr. Rolfe," collected in *The Triple Thinkers*, he summons up the moment when he lost for good what little faith he had, as he was riding the train from his New Jersey home to the Hill School in Pennsylvania and reading George Bernard Shaw's *Major Barbara*, where he came upon the sentence, "At present there is not a single credible established religion in the world." That was all it took to convert him to defiant lifelong atheism. "I have never thought of

religion since save as a delusion entertained by other people which one has to try to allow for and understand." There is more than a little intellectual vanity, not to mention spiritual deadwood, in a man who allows such a callow adolescent presumption to stand unexamined for a lifetime that is supposedly devoted to the most serious thought.

Yet he does not always seem callow or smug about his unbelief. Against the pervasive spiritual desolation of his time he cleaves to a tough-minded common sense, as in the 1929 essay "T.S. Eliot and the Church of England":

The answer to Mr. Eliot's assertion that "it is doubtful whether civilization can endure without religion" is that we have got to make it endure. Nobody will pretend that this is going to be easy; but it can hardly be more difficult than persuading oneself that the leadership of the future will be supplied by the Church of England or by the Roman Catholic Church or by any church whatsoever.

In that same essay Wilson steamrolls the several quasi-religious fantasies of leading American intellectuals and artists, from H.L. Mencken's taste for Nietzsche and good German beer to the Southern Agrarians' fondness for kindly slavemasters and obliging darkies to Dos Passos's hope of the great proletarian uprising.

EVENTS WERE TO IMPOSE UPON WILSON'S sensible liberalism, however, and the Great Depression saw him turn to Communism as the curative for civilization's despair. He never joined the Party, but his writing took on some of the hysterical, radicalized flavor he had derided in Dos Passos earlier. *The American Earthquake* collects his political reporting from the 1930s, and therein he declares himself the sworn enemy of bourgeois temporizing in the face of rampant misery. In "Hull-House in 1932" he blisters "the deadened civilization of industry, where people are kept just alive enough to see that the machines are running." In "Foster and Fish," about the confrontation between American Communist Party leader William Z. Foster and Hamilton Fish, chairman of a House committee investigating Communism, he extols the Communists' superiority to the typical liberals in will, discipline, integrity, and courage. In "The Jumping-off Place," about San Diego as the nation's suicide capital, epitome of native anguish and exhaustion, he concludes with a black parody of the all-American Whitmaniacal catalogue:

...they stuff up the cracks of their doors and quietly turn on the gas; they go into

their back sheds or back kitchens and eat ant-paste or swallow Lysol; they drive their cars into dark alleys, get into the back seat and shoot themselves; they hang themselves in hotel bedrooms, take overdoses of sulphonal or barbitol; they slip off to the municipal golf-links and there stab themselves with carving-knives; or they throw themselves into the bay, blue and placid, where gray battleships and cruisers guard the limits of their broad-belted nation—already reaching out in the eighties for the sugar plantations of Honolulu.

It is without apparent irony, then, that in *To the Finland Station* (1940) Wilson quotes Maxim Gorky's encomium to Lenin's "burning faith that suffering was not an essential and unavoidable part of life, but an abomination that people should and could sweep away." Wilson's history of socialist thought and action to the beginnings of the Russian Revolution is one of his finest works, impressive even to a reader who finds the author's heroes to be some of history's most nefarious villains. What ignites Wilson at least as much as economic justice for the proletariat is the vision of humanity attaining its full glory, in the style of his many-sided cultural magnificos:

And Marx and Engels had always before them—something which the later Marxists have sometimes quite lost sight of—the ideal man of the Renaissance of the type of Leonardo or Machiavelli, who had a head for both the sciences and the arts, who was both thinker and man of action. It was, in fact, one of their chief objections to the stratified industrial society that it specialized people in occupations in such a way as to make it impossible for them to develop more than a single aptitude; and it was one of their great arguments for communism that it would produce "complete" men again.

To produce shining generations of complete men, however, tens of millions of lesser specimens would have to be shattered, and Wilson is clear-sighted about Marx's unsparing murderousness:

And if he exposes the dark depths of the industrial system, it is less to move us to fellow-feeling with the workers than to destroy the human aspect of their masters. The bourgeoisie, in Karl Marx's writings, are created mainly in caricature; and the proletariat figure mainly as their crimes. There is in Marx an irreducible discrepancy between the good which he proposes

for humanity and the ruthlessness and hatred he inculcates as a means of arriving at this—a discrepancy which, in the history of Marxism, has given rise to much moral confusion.

WILSON'S OWN MORAL CONFUSION IS patent. By the time he completed his book, Stalinist enormities had disillusioned him with the Soviet Union, but he continued to revere Lenin and what Lenin's wife Krupskaya called "the grand solemn beauty" of the Revolution; Wilson seemed pathetically blind to the fact that Lenin was the founding father of the Stalinist terror regime. Perhaps the best one can say about Wilson's infatuation with Communism is that he was not as stupid about it as many of his comrades were.

The poet Delmore Schwartz paid tribute in a 1942 essay to Wilson's "fundamental decency," a phrase that would "do very well if it reminds the reader of the heroes of Henry James," and a quality that was "a living remnant perhaps of Christianity." Both Henry James and Jesus Christ would frown at the comparison. Wilson was an alcoholic and a serial adulterer who betrayed every one of his four wives and who brawled with the third, the writer Mary McCarthy (although McCarthy was such a brute and an inveterate liar that it is hard to know if he really beat her or was just warding off her blows). The fundamental indecency of Wilson's personal life does not nullify the quality of his intellectual life, but the flaws in Wilson's career—the willful dismissal of metaphysical questioning, the political follies—do suggest the limitations of fundamental decency, which is not much more than a spirited and compassionate gentlemanliness, as the foundation of a truly rich mental life. Voracious curiosity and indefatigable industry make up for a lot; there is no critic writing today with Wilson's range of mastery. (George Steiner and Harold Bloom, both men of rhetorical flair and stunning erudition, might have surpassed Wilson had they not become parodies of themselves.) Yet his gifts and accomplishments also point up what is lacking. In 1928 Wilson wrote an essay called "The Critic Who Does Not Exist," about the need in American letters for a critic of the highest seriousness. He was of course offering himself as a candidate. At his best he became that critic; yet there is a good deal in his work that shames his best. Edmund Wilson remains the finest critic American literature has produced; we can only hope for a better.

Algis Valiunas is a literary journalist and the author of *Churchill's Military Histories* (Rowman & Littlefield).

Book Review by Paul A. Rahe

THE GREAT AND THE GOOD

The Case for Greatness: Honorable Ambition and Its Critics,
by Robert Faulkner. Yale University Press, 288 pages, \$30



ON THE DUST JACKET OF THIS SLIM, ELEGANT volume, Yale University Press has reproduced "Phaeton," an engraving from Hendrik Goltzius's *The Four Disgracers*, depicting the fall of a legendary Greek hero who attempted to drive the chariot of the sun and was struck down by a thunderbolt to prevent him from inadvertently setting the world on fire. The image is appropriate, for in this book Robert Faulkner pulls no punches. His aim is the defense of political greatness, but he takes very great care to display its dark side as well.

Faulkner, a professor of political science at Boston College, begins with common sense, and from it he never strays far. He observes that to deny the value of what he calls "honorable or statesmanlike ambition" one must be willing to suppose there is no substantive difference between the aims and accomplishments of Nelson Mandela, George Washington, and Winston Churchill on the one hand, and those of Idi Amin, Joseph Stalin, and Neville Chamberlain on the other. To make sense of what every man on the street instinctively knows and many an academic fiercely denies, he contends that we must reconsider the ruminations on the "great-

souled man" (*megalopsuchos*) and on politics and virtue found in several ancient works: Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics* and *Politics*, Thucydides' *History of the Peloponnesian War*, the dialogues Plato devoted to the problem of Alcibiades, and Xenophon's *Education of Cyrus*. To the exploration of the pertinent themes within these works he devotes two-thirds of this volume.

Reading these chapters requires considerable patience, for Faulkner advances his argument less by laying it out in a straightforward fashion than by exploring the nooks and crannies of the various texts he is examining. To grasp fully what he is up to, one must re-read Aristotle, Thucydides, Plato, and Xenophon and then re-read them again alongside the related chapters of Faulkner's work. As this may suggest, one could easily build a course around the book. Despite its title, it is anything but a lawyer's brief. It is a series of meditations and, after reading it, one cannot conclude that political greatness is always and everywhere an unmixed good. Faulkner never mentions Abraham Lincoln's well-known speech to the Young Men's Lyceum in Springfield, Illinois, but one can hear it playing in the background. The passion for

superior accomplishment can be destructive as well as creative.

FAULKNER BEGINS WITH ARISTOTLE, AND the chapter that he devotes to the Peripatetic is arguably the most important in the book. In it, he lays out the themes that he will later explore in greater depth in the chapters on Thucydides, Plato, and Xenophon. It is his conviction that Aristotle "sought to portray and foster" what Faulkner calls "the phenomenon of the gentleman-statesman or gentleman-ruler." It is also his conviction that Aristotle's account of greatness of soul is "no mere eulogy." The Peripatetic's aim was "an intellectual clarification and a political moderation and purification." To this end, although "Aristotle begins with an opinion admiring greatness of soul," he "ends with a surprising depreciation of that and of great politics generally."

Aristotle stands out because he refuses to reduce moral to political virtue—he "treats great ambition within a moral context that seems to stand on its own." But if he embraces "greatness of soul," he also considers it a double-edged sword—necessary to a polity in a time of trouble

yet dangerous to it as well. There is, Faulkner insists, nothing utopian about Aristotle's outlook. He is perfectly aware that ordinary politics leaves little space for men of great soul, and he even suggests that an ostracism of the great-souled man may be demanded by what he calls "political justice"—by that form of rough justice that takes precedence everywhere as a consequence of the necessity to defend the political regime. Right must, in fact, be subordinated to regime, and out of self-defense any sort of polity will have to eliminate those within it whose capacities tower over it. Aristotle prefers safe regimes, such as middle-class republics, to great politics.

Even more to the point, Aristotle argues that greatness of soul is less impressive than greatness of mind, that empire is an impediment to the good life, that *praxis* is of doubtful value. The great-souled man falls short of the philosopher in self-knowledge. His claims need to be moderated.

WITH THIS IN MIND, FAULKNER ASKS that we consider Alcibiades, and he devotes one chapter to Thucydides' treatment of the would-be Athenian statesman and another to the enigmatic treatment given Pericles' ward in the two dialogues Plato named after him, in the *Protagoras*, and in the *Symposium*. Faulkner's initial theme is "the problems such grand ambition poses for free countries." He contends, as did Aristophanes in *The Frogs*, that Athens could not do with Alcibiades or without him, and he argues that, when driven into exile and given the opportunity to turn coat, Alcibiades proved to be indispensable to Sparta and Persia as well. Faulkner pays close attention to the dark side of Alcibiades' ambition—to his fury at those who have slighted him—and he outlines the manner in which his conduct contributed to great upheavals both at home and abroad. But he insists as well on Alcibiades' genius—on his unfailing grasp of the strategic situation, and on his capacity as a diplomat to get others to do Athens', Sparta's, and Persia's dirty work for them. This chapter is marred by an occasional error in fact and in historical judgment. Hermocrates was no more successful at Syracuse than Alcibiades at Athens, and Chios did not "turn oligarchic" before revolting: it had always been an oligarchy. But Faulkner's overall understanding is, nonetheless, sound, and he deploys it to lay the groundwork for a consideration of Plato's *Alcibiades I* and *Alcibiades II* that is simply luminous.

In this chapter, Faulkner turns from Alcibiades' career to his soul, and he illuminates this by examining Socrates' repeated interrogation of the young man. In Faulkner's view, Alcibiades exemplifies the self-contradictions that bedevil political ambition unmoderated by a philosophical outlook and awareness. Above all, Alcibiades

is defective in self-knowledge; and, by repeatedly bringing home to him his lack of this crucial quality, Socrates makes him profoundly ashamed. In the end, however, Alcibiades is insufficiently serious about the truth; in the end, he is governed by his passion for superiority and is, in that sense, out of control. Socrates may be able to moderate Alcibiades' moral outlook and to prevent him from succumbing to moral righteousness when angry. He may be able to put some distance between the young man and the punitive gods and heroes of Greek legend, but that is all.

If Alcibiades is warm (and the Greeks, both women and men, thought him hot), Faulkner suggests that the elder Cyrus, as represented by Xenophon in the *Cyropaedia*, is a very chilly character, worthy of the admiration that Machiavelli conferred on him. What most scholars read as a romantic novel written in praise of this largely fictive great-souled man and of everything for which he stands, Faulkner quite rightly treats as admonitory. There is no denying Cyrus' accomplishments, and Xenophon allows us to see how others profit from them. But he never lets us forget the price they pay in accepting servitude, and at the very end he deflates the entire enterprise by outlining its long-term consequences—moral and physical decadence—for all the peoples involved. On top of this, Cyrus' claim to have achieved happiness proves hollow. In Xenophon's depiction, the founder of the Achaemenid empire seems less interested in attaining happiness than in having a reputation for it. Like Alcibiades, he is driven, and in self-knowledge, he falls dismally short.

HAD FAULKNER ENDED HIS BOOK ON THIS note, he would appear to have made a case against rather than for greatness. It is only when we get to the sixth chapter and his assessment of George Washington that we get more than a glimpse of what he calls "honorable ambition." This chapter begins with a consideration of Douglass Adair's celebrated essay "Fame and the Founding Fathers," which Faulkner evidently admires. But it is his conviction that Adair conflated the ancient with the early modern understanding, that his account might be adequate to Benjamin Franklin, but that it failed to do full justice to Washington in particular and arguably to others as well. To show what he means, Faulkner juxtaposes Adair's portrait of Washington, which is rooted in the thinking of Sir Francis Bacon, with that in the multi-volume biography by John Marshall, who repeatedly turns to Cicero's *De officiis*; and he demonstrates that time and again Washington was prepared to sacrifice fame and reputation for the purpose of doing the right thing. To make sense of Washington's character, Marshall had to speak such old-fashioned words as justice, duty, and the common good.

Never, we are told, did Washington stoop to retain popular favor by deserving to lose it.

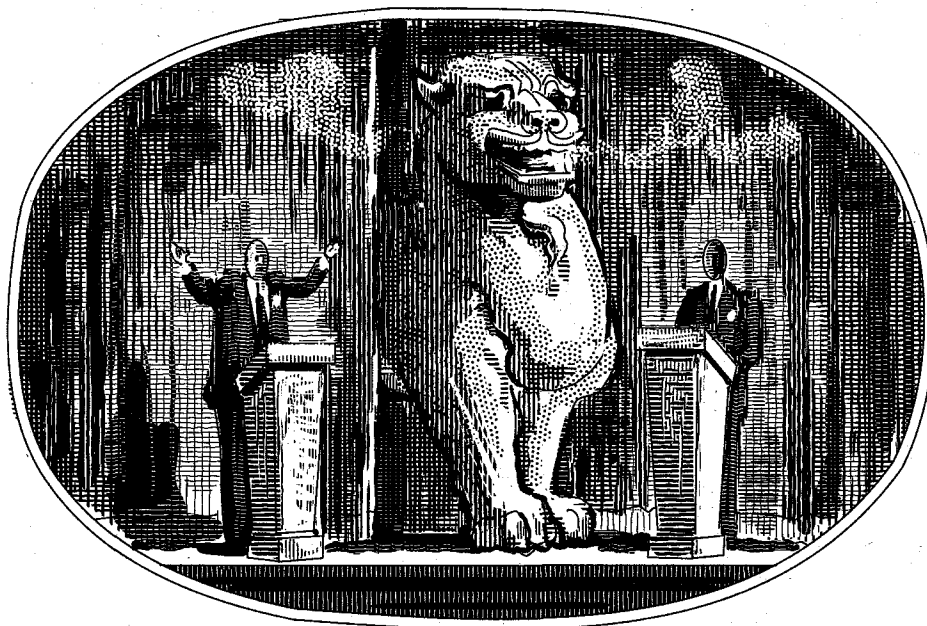
In his *Auseinandersetzung* with Adair, Faulkner is completely successful. In one particular, however, we are left in the dark. One would like to know what it was that instilled in Washington so strong a sense of justice, duty, and the common good. Was it his reading of Cicero? Did the Enlightenment play a role? And what about Christianity? Years ago, Karl Löwith wrote an essay asking whether there could be a Christian gentleman. In it, he acknowledged the phenomenon but denied its theoretical coherence. This would appear to be the view of James Bowman, whose book *Honor: A History* (2006) Faulkner briefly touches on in his introduction. It is striking that Faulkner mentions no ancient exemplars comparable to Washington. This may be an oversight, but I somehow doubt it. I found myself wishing that Faulkner had written more—about figures whom he mentions, such as Nelson Mandela, Abraham Lincoln, Kemal Atatürk, and Winston Churchill (who was once described as "Alcibiades with hats"), and about the *paideia* that distinguished them from the merely ambitious.

Instead of addressing this question, Faulkner devotes his final two chapters to the intellectual roots of the modern hostility to *megalopsuchia*. One chapter he devotes to John Rawls and Hannah Arendt; the other, to Thomas Hobbes, Immanuel Kant, and Friedrich Nietzsche. This may be useful, and Faulkner's treatment of Rawls and Arendt is both hilarious and just. But I wonder whether they are worth the bother. Who reads Rawls these days? Who ever read him through? That he once had a sterling reputation as a philosopher is testimony to the deficiencies of academic philosophy in the last century. Arendt retains a certain adolescent charm, to be sure, and her restatement of the standard critique of bourgeois society has bite. But, as Faulkner all too easily demonstrates, there is a great deal of ostentation in her work and next to no substance. Will anyone remember either of these two figures when Faulkner and I have gone to our Maker? I doubt it, and it seems to me that there is little point in flogging a dead horse.

Faulkner's treatment of Hobbes, Kant, and Nietzsche is of greater value. But, as he acknowledges, it is exceedingly brief. To do justice to the case against honorable ambition would have required a different and much longer book. To clarify how ambition comes to be honorable—that, I think, Faulkner could have done in greater depth, and perhaps, if we are fortunate, he will turn to this task. I, for one, would like to know more.

Paul A. Rahe is professor of history and political science at Hillsdale College.

RICH COUNTRY, STRONG ARMS



AN INTERESTING PROJECT FOR ONE OF THE journalists covering the formulaic debates between presidential candidates might be to quiz the aspirants about their party platforms and white papers. If my own experience is a guide, this would elicit blank looks and dead air. White papers and platforms exist, to quote no one in particular, "to keep the nuts busy and out of the way." What matters is what the candidates say, and more importantly, what they say repeatedly, for they come to believe it even if it is in essence a lie.

Although China may be included in unread position papers, it has yet to make a major appearance in 2008's parochial and self-referential presidential campaign. No one has yet made it an issue or set it out as a marker. Should the candidates address it, they would probably call for trade protection or comment on human rights and sport. Worldwide, activists of every stripe, from dilettante movie stars to Tibetans and Uighurs willing to lay down their lives, have seen China's coming into the light because of the Olympics as a point of leverage by which to make its governance more humane and democratic. They are mistaken. To begin with, they misread China's desire to impress, taking it as an appeal for approval. But, in accordance with its historically China-centric view, China is making not an appeal but an assertion. The more it appeases world opinion—such as by meeting with envoys of the Tibetan government in exile—the more it will rigidify in matters of substance.

Although it is dependent upon international trade, so are its trading partners, who, having begun the relationship knowing the nature of affairs in China, will not kill the goose that manufactures their golden eggs. Then there is China's great mass and strategic position, geographical and otherwise, insulating it from most pressure or influence. It is not Luxembourg. It is now a great power, and it knows it will not be conquered by the Mongols, the West, or Japan.

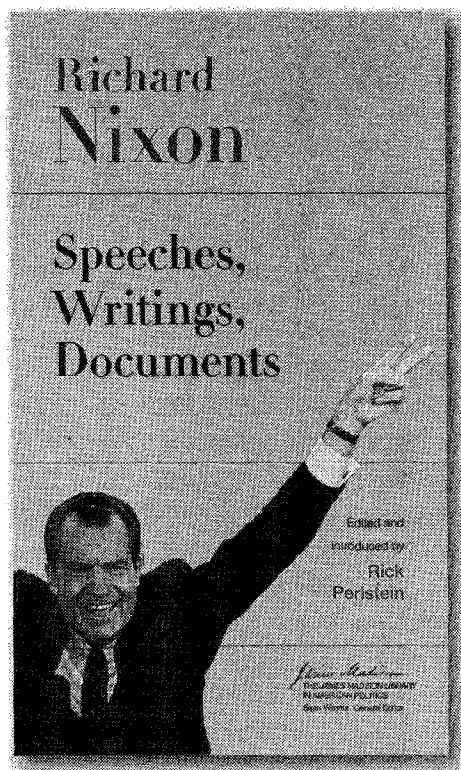
Its posture in regard to what the West seeks to change is neither arbitrary nor capricious, but dictated by imperatives of such great weight that they cannot be moved from the outside. First, there is the traditional Chinese style of governance, bred in the bone, thousands of years old, and not republican democracy. Then there is the remnant amalgam of the Maoist-Marxian-Chinese-imperial state, to which the ruling elite clings by education, habit, and lest in shifting away from it everything break apart. And, of course, there is plain economic determinism. China's almost miraculous leap forward since the 1978 Third Plenum of the 11th Party Congress Central Committee, analogous in many respects to a 19th-century industrial revolution on speed, is dependent upon cheap labor and high discipline. Both (along with the suppression of Tibet) attract the attention of outside reformers, and neither (along with the suppression of Tibet) will change other than by internal evolution, as they are China's chief structural supports, something of which the leadership could not be more vividly aware.

Which is not to say that efforts from without to improve rights and conditions are uncalled for, but rather that they are effective only as a very tiny flame to which, when the Chinese themselves are ready, they will touch their own torch of liberty. This tiny flame should not be drowned in the torrents of realpolitik. Neither should it dominate the agenda, public and private, as it has because American foreign policy in the past 16 years has been, in a word, incoherent, with the resultant vacuousness easy to fill with whatever enjoys the greatest power of publicity.

Were American foreign policy even slightly less oblivious, it would refocus its prime attentions away from reactive consideration of Tibet, Taiwan, tariffs, and Treasuries, and upon the two essential challenges that underlie each of these issues, and that we have failed to meet even though they play to our traditional strengths. The first is economic, the second military. These are inextricably bound together, and if we do not attend to them we may in this century discover in a place above us a nation recently so impotent that we cannot now convince ourselves to look into the blow it may strike.

The Rise of China

EVERY DAY, BY MEASURES SUCH AS THE RATE and nature of economic expansion, the character and patriotism of youth, and military and technological development, China grows stronger and the United States becomes relatively weaker. To some, this is of little mo-



Richard Nixon

Speeches, Writings, Documents

Edited and introduced by Rick Perlstein

The first book to present America's most controversial president in his own words across his entire career, this unique collection of Richard Nixon's most important writings dramatically demonstrates why he has had such a profound impact on American life. The volume gathers everything from schoolboy letters to geostrategic manifestos and Oval Office transcripts to create a fascinating portrait of Nixon, one that is enriched by an extensive introduction in which Rick Perlstein puts forward a major reinterpretation of the thirty-seventh president's rise and fall.

"This selection of Nixon documents is excellent, as is Rick Perlstein's introduction. It gets Nixon right, and it identifies the defining themes of his life and career."

—David Greenberg, Rutgers University, author of *Nixon's Shadow: The History of an Image*

The James Madison Library in American Politics
Sean Wilentz, General Editor

Paper \$16.95 978-0-691-13699-8



PRINCETON
UNIVERSITY
PRESS

press.princeton.edu

ment because of China's protestations that in both senses of the word it is a *Pacific* power. But as the Yuan Dynasty, which stretched from Siberia to the Euphrates and from Moscow to the Arabian Sea; and as China's modern wars in Korea, Vietnam, India, and on the Amur; and its claims in regard to Tibet, Taiwan, the Spratlys, the Paracels, the Senkakus, and regions of India and Siberia show, it has not been and is not pacific by nature and is not the anomaly among nations it claims to be. China is not by nature our enemy. Nor would it have to be to present a problem. American Tories did not flee to Cuba, ally with Great Britain, and establish a government claiming sovereignty over the mainland. Cuba does not share our language or culture, and yet we have managed to invade it twice; once under a Republican, once under a Democrat, as if for good measure. We cannot expect that in regard to Taiwan China will forever be more forbearing than we have been in regard to Cuba, or that, if it is not, it is any more villainous than we are. One cannot place one's trust in the virtues of nations, but rather must be prepared for the amorality of the international system.

Nor can or should one take comfort from the view that China may run off the rails into the kind of strife that André Malraux described in *La Condition humaine*, a suicidal malfunctioning on a spectacular scale. Thirty years have passed with the almost flawless implementation of the Sixteen-Character Policy, Deng Xiaoping's blueprint for the renaissance of China. Whatever its difficulties, China now has an immense internal market newly unified by modern communications and transportation; a mature and rapidly flowering technology; a large pool of "internal offshore labor" that as long as it enjoys a steady and substantive rise in its standard of living—the compass of the Chinese leadership—should remain relatively content; the wider world, now freely accessible, that will buy anything it can make, and sell it the raw materials to feed its great manufacturing engine; and the advantage that no new "tiger" in Southeast Asia, Africa, or South America competing to unseat it from its mercantilist position has either the cohesion, scale, culture, or discipline with which to supplant it.

How did this happen in so short a time? China's success in amplifying its power is due in part to what may be called "the gift of the Meiji." That is, the transformation of the Japanese slogan *fukoku kyohei*—rich country, strong arms—into the Sixteen-Character Policy: "Combine the military and the civil; combine peace and war; give priority to military products; let the civil support the military." After humiliation and occupation by the West closely parallel to what also befell China, predominant-

ly agricultural Japan rapidly transformed itself into an industrial state that could successfully wage war with modern arms against Russia, a second-tier European power, and then, not that many decades later, offer a mortal challenge to the world's leading naval power, the United States.

It was able to vault with preternatural speed into the first ranks of the leading nations because it understood the relation of economic growth to military potential. Unlike the United States, which, almost unconsciously, governs itself reactively and predominantly for the short term, China has plotted a long course in which with great deliberation it joins growth to military expansion. Consider the following hypothetical example: In an imaginary country with a population of 100 million and a GNP of \$10 billion, even one dollar for defense subtracted from each person's income would equal 1% of his sustenance, or the equivalent of four days in which, because he lives at the margin, he would not eat. But in the same country with a GNP of \$100 billion, the government could extract, say, \$400 from each person, who would still be living a full six times better than in his recent memory. This vast difference is that between a defense budget of \$100 million and a discontented population, and a defense budget of \$40 billion and a population richer than it had ever imagined itself. A tenfold increase in GNP has been transformed into a four-hundred-fold increase in defense expenditure—because of a most extraordinary relation that escapes most observers who keep in mind merely two variables rather than three, the third being per capita income, which defines the permitted levels of diversion to military spending without causing social discontent or collapse.

This is theory. In reality, it is necessary to take into account population growth, inflation, and the need to attend to the expanding appetites of a people new to prosperity. But the relation is still extraordinarily potent. In 1950, Egypt's GNP was 4.5 times Israel's. In 2006, because of its high rate of growth—which from its founding to the eve of the Six-Day War averaged 11% per annum—Israel's was 1.5 times larger than Egypt's, and, more importantly, its per capita GNP was 17 times larger, allowing it, with ease, a defense budget almost three times as large as Egypt's.

Although, with an eye to social stability and the speed at which its military can reshape itself and absorb new weaponry, China prudently spends less on defense than it could, it, too, is an example of how a country with restrained population growth and a high rate of economic expansion can over time improve its standard of living dramatically and simultaneously elevate

military spending almost beyond belief. Specifically, its average annual growth of roughly 9% over the past 20 years has resulted in a tenfold increase in per capita GNP, and a 21-fold increase in purchasing-power-parity military expenditure. Although inflation lessens the drama of this, it is still phenomenal.

Hard Figures

AS CHINA RISES RAPIDLY FROM A SMALL base and the United States crawls ahead relative to a large one, eventually the twain shall meet. We have already partially ceded the field to China and a resurgent Russia by contenting ourselves with the fallacy that never again shall we have to fight large, technological militaries; and by making the pathetic bet that, if we do, we can prevail with our extraordinary and rather delicate new weapons in obviously, patently, and painfully insufficient numbers.

For example, the call for the F-22, the world's most capable air dominance aircraft (although it will forfeit that title during the latter part of its museum-bait service life) was reduced over approximately a ten-year period from 648, to 339, to 183. This means that, exclusive of maintenance, training, and test, roughly 125 aircraft will be available to cover the entire world. China, India, and Russia are narrowing the distance between their first-line fighters and ours, even the F-22, and they will build theirs in greater numbers. The same story is repeated without relief throughout our diminished air echelons, shrinking fleets, and ground forces that have been turned from heavy battle to nation-building and counter-insurgency, the work not of an army but of a gendarmerie.

This may be illustrated by the following: in 1989, the U.S. had a wondrous anti-submarine-warfare establishment, and 133 submarines to China's 93. Today, the U.S. has 71 submarines to China's 62, and for almost 20 years has allowed anti-submarine-warfare to wither on the vine. To balance the potential of the largely coastal Chinese submarine fleet, the United States must revive its anti-submarine-warfare capacity by, inter alia, practice in our own territorial waters, as other coasts belong to other nations. But whereas the passion in China is to "let the civil support the military," including building the People's Liberation Army Navy, the passion in this country is to protect sea mammals from sonar, thus successfully blocking coastal anti-submarine-warfare training.

During this period of our neglect, China has moved to freeze the nuclear dimension of our rivalry, via its policy of effective parity, which, after deep American reductions, the creation of sea bastions for Chinese ballistic missile

submarines, its building of solid-fueled mobile missiles, and its increase in warhead numbers, will become actual parity. (For greater detail on the nuclear balance, see my "China as a Rising Nuclear Power," CRB, Spring 2007.) The China that has threatened to turn Los Angeles to cinder is arguably more casual about nuclear weapons than are we, and may find parity a stimulus to brinkmanship. Who will blink first, a Barack Obama (who even now blinks like Betty Boop) or a Mao Tse-Tung?

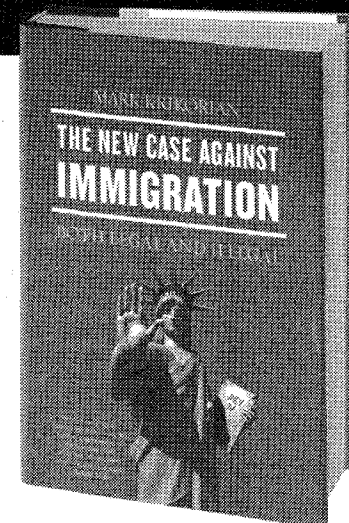
China hasn't the amphibious or aerial lift for a successful invasion of Taiwan, but its shipyards, which produced 220,000 tons of shipping in 1980 and 13 million tons in 2006 (with 20 million projected for 2010), and its fast-growing aircraft industries, could, if directed, make this a moot point in a very short time. The purpose of the almost 1,000 intermediate- and short-range missiles arrayed opposite Taiwan, in conjunction with the future emplacement of the Russian SA-20 120-mile range air defense system, is to deny the U.S. a clear sky and expeditionary airfields, and, with real-time-terminal guidance from space, cleanse the adjacent waters of American warships. To counter this, the United States can—and, with the recent downing of a "menacing" American satellite in decaying orbit, threatens to—deploy the naval anti-satellite capacity with which, to date, and presumably out of sheer politeness, we have only flirted. Not that we will have to or should necessarily defend Taiwan, which is a separate question. We certainly should, however, be able to do so, as a matter of deterrence, flexibility, and reserve strength.

China has designed its David-like asymmetrically planned forces to elide into a Goliath-like full-spectrum military capable of major operations and remote power projection. And it has in full and rising measure what the 14th-century historian Ibn Khaldun called *asabiya*, the will, spirit, and momentum of a people in ascension. Of all its potential advantages perhaps the most powerful is that in geopolitical terms it thinks lucidly and ambitiously, whereas its chief rival, the United States, has ceased to think geopolitically at all almost as a requirement of faith.

In Africa and South America, China is building networks of informal alliances that in combination with an efflorescent Chinese power may result in the kind of high strategic leverage to which most Americans are deaf unless they are protesting our exercise of it. Most wars are silent, seemingly uneventful, and chiefly of maneuver, but at their end the losers are still dominated, dispirited, and subject to diktat.

Our object is not to regain the power we and the Europeans had over China in the 19th and

THE PROBLEM IS NOT THE IMMIGRANTS—IT'S US



"When it comes to our immigration mess, no one has a deeper understanding of the facts than Mark Krikorian. **Pay attention: America's future is at stake.**" —MICHELLE MALKIN

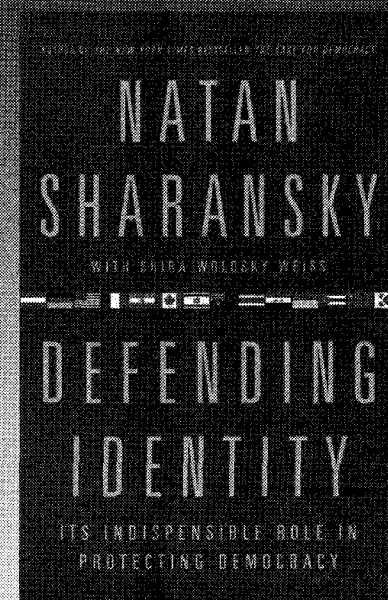
"Superbly researched and brilliantly argued, it should settle the debate once and for all." —DAVID FRUM



Available now from Sentinel
A member of Penguin Group (USA)
www.penguin.com

Visit www.cis.org

"The enemy's will is strong because his identity is strong."



Not all cultures are the same. Not all values are equivalent. Democracy is worth fighting for, and, if necessary, worth dying for. In this provocative new book, Natan Sharansky, author of *The Case for Democracy*, explains why those who value freedom must match our enemy's strength of purpose with strong identities of our own.

Now available from PUBLICAFFAIRS
www.publicaffairsbooks.com

early 20th centuries, but, now that things are in flux, to keep China from attaining a similar power over us. This necessitates keeping the correlation of forces in our favor, not to dominate but for the sake of stability in maintaining a consistent position and lest the rapid evening encourage China to push past us and beyond. To the protest that it is too early to be concerned, the fitting answer is that if anything it is too late.

Restoring the Balance

WHAT, THEN, CAN WE DO, WE WHO look back at the once typical American generation of the Second World War and, as great as it was, call it that only because we ourselves are so diminished? We can, in fact, compete with China; we can deter it from a range of military options; and we can maintain at least a balance of power if not a correlation of forces favorable to us. The default military position of the Democrats is for the country to be violently impotent, but to hint without a tittle of specificity that somehow and somewhere deep within their velvet is an iron fist. For the Republicans it is more or less the opposite: i.e., present weakly the iron fist and hint strongly that after growth in office it will velvetize. Economically, each party is so fearful of setbacks that it courts them. Neither dares speak of the inevitable blood, sweat, toil, and tears to which no nation is forever immune. The comfortable present will become uncomfortable one way or another. We can either run from the difficulties, magnifying them dishonorably, or face and demystify them.

In the past we have been able to outwit both more advanced industrial economies and those floating upon seas of cheap labor—by innovating and automating. Restriction of trade or waiting for equalization of labor costs will only impoverish us as we fail to compete in world markets. Until China's labor costs equal ours, the only way to compete with its manufactures is intensely to mechanize our own. The problem is cheap labor. The solution, therefore, is automation. In the '70s we laid this challenge aside and have since forgotten it. Whereas the structure of China's population, economy, and industry does not encourage mechanization, ours cries out for it. But instead of continuing to automate our production, which digitalization clearly makes possible, we have turned to entertainment. As we complain of industry moving offshore, we have put our culture in an electronic stupor—an anesthetic with which both to ensure and grow numb to defeat. But our understanding of information processing, sensing and measuring devices, artificial intel-

ligence, nanotechnics, and materials science makes the automation of production a frontier we are exquisitely equipped to conquer. The pertinent question is not where is the outrage that we have not, but where is even the dim consciousness that we can and should? Who speaks of this in the presidential campaign? The candidates prefer, rather, though the answer is readily at hand, to whine and console.

Nor is there any great mystery in regard to the military dimension. We can and must readopt a clear view of deterrence, the balance of power, the military balance, the detailed orders of battle, and, if war is unavoidable, how to frame attainable war aims. Contemporary statesmen such as they are cannot even define these terms, much less apply them, and yet each is crucial for any nation that wants to keep its head above water. The assertion that weapons make war and we are the font of both has been argued almost to the point of general acceptance, and then easily coupled with reluctance to part with the peace dividend. But a military imbalance, especially in how it trends, has always created the vacuums of power that, perceived as opportunities, stimulate nations to aggressive actions. In slackening today, we are inviting war in the future—not as the result of evil intent or a malevolent or greedy plan, but from a circumstantial clash of the legitimate interests of nations insufficiently wary of one another's powers as balances shift and deterrents fade. This is now the dynamic with China. As our military is frustrated and worn down by a little war against a small enemy made terrible by the potential of weapons of mass destruction, the shift in the Pacific goes unaddressed as if it is unaddressable. But it is eminently addressable.

In comparison with its recent history, American military effort has of late been exceptionally restrained. Were we to allot the average of 5.7% of GNP that we devoted annually to defense in the *peacetime* years of 1940–2000, we would have as a matter of course \$800 billion each year (twice as much as we now spend other than in direct war costs) with which to develop and sustain our forces. During the Second World War, we spent up to 40% of GNP on defense, and yet the economy expanded in real terms and we did not live like paupers. Now, when we are supposedly at war, and are spending approximately a tenth of that, what do we expect immediately and in the long term if not defeat by one name or another? The irony is that the very mechanism by means of which China is mounting its challenge—growth that elevates per capita income and provides higher and higher discretionary margins—has been ours for so long that we have forgotten it. It is what made us the arsenal of democracy during World War II,

and the discretionary margins are now so much greater that even at rest our potential dwarfs what it was then.

Other advantages are also ours to lose. The oceans have been our battlefields since the beginning; we invented powered flight; and our automobiles still await us on the surface of the moon. Our *métiers* are the sea, air, and space, and thus we have been blessed by geography, for with the exception of South Korea our allies in the Pacific are islands. With Japan, Australasia, our own island territories, and Admiral Nimitz's ocean, we can match and exceed indefinitely any development of Chinese strategical power—which, by definition, must take to the sea and air.

Statesmanship

AND THERE WE WILL BE, IF WE ARE WISE, not with 280 ships but a thousand, and not the contemptible 1,000-ship navy counting all the navies of the West (including Denmark's), but American warships. Not with eleven carriers, or nine, but 40. Not with 183 F-22s, but a thousand, and so on. That is, the levels of military potential that the traditional *peacetime* expenditures of GNP have provided, without strain, throughout most of our lives. As opposed to war with a rising power emboldened by our weakness and retirement, this would be infinitely cheaper.

It would of necessity have to be coupled with well-tended alliances, a tranquil and statesmanly understanding of deterrence, and, should deterrence fail, with reasonable, sustainable, non-messianic war aims premised not on a vision of what the world should be (leave that to Marxists and the clergy) but on defending the interests and existence of the United States and its allies—interests that are not perpetually guaranteed as if by some magic, and existence that cannot be taken for granted.

With intelligent direction and undeflectable resolve, we can have a stable peace in the Pacific and elsewhere. In their absence, we shall suffer either slow and ignominious defeat without war, or war with a tortuous unfolding and an uncertain end, and, of course, millions of broken hearts—like the war we are fighting now, because we did not heed these lessons in time.

And yet what candidate is alert to this? Who asserts that our sinews are still intact? That we can meet any challenge with our great and traditional strengths? That beneath a roiled surface is a power almost limitless yet fair, supple yet restrained? Who will speak of such things in time, and who will dare to awaken them?

Mark Helprin is a senior fellow of the Claremont Institute.

Book Review by John Fonte

BEYOND THE NATION STATE

The Great Experiment: The Story of Ancient Empires, Modern States, and the Quest for a Global Nation,
by Strobe Talbott. Simon & Schuster, 496 pages, \$30

Democracy Without Borders? Global Challenges to Liberal Democracy, by Marc F. Plattner.
Rowman & Littlefield, 178 pages, \$65 (cloth), \$24.95 (paper)



STROBE TALBOTT, FORMER DEPUTY SECRETARY of State for Bill Clinton and currently president of the Brookings Institution, has written a book that is full of insights into the mindset of “transnational progressivism” and the strategy of promoting “global governance.” Here, for instance, is a White House meeting of Bill Clinton’s foreign policy team just before the president’s first address to the United Nations. The Cold War was over, and Clinton was pondering the “direction of history.” Al Gore weighed in:

Rousseau said the body politic is a moral being possessed of a will. He was thinking on the national level. We need to take it to the international one. We need to make the leap from nationhood to a sense of identity that is truly global, but that embodies Rousseau’s point.

According to Talbott, Clinton agreed in principle, but was concerned about how to sell the idea: “that’s great stuff Al...but until I can say it in a single phrase, we’re sunk.”

Talbott tells us that Clinton held two core foreign policy beliefs: that American preeminence was temporary—“We’re not going to be cock of the roost forever”—and that “history evinces positive ‘directionality’” towards global cooperation, interdependence, and peace. Clin-

ton, writes Talbott, was “careful not to broadcast” these beliefs “[f]or most of his time in office,” because to do so would have invited charges of decline-ism and “wooly-headed” naïveté. But once liberated from the presidency, Clinton openly stated: “We must build a global social system” and “a world for our grandchildren to live in where America was no longer the sole superpower.”

Shortly before the 1992 election, Talbott spelled out in a memo to Clinton a strategy for “multilateralism” that envisioned a *transnational* rather than an *international* order:

they [Americans] are mighty chary about any arrangement that smacks of pooled national sovereignty or authority. The way to counter this resistance, of course, is to sell multilateralism as not just an economic imperative but as a means of preserving and enhancing American political leadership in the world.

This is an argument that we can expect to hear again and again in the coming years—that American “leadership” or “interests” will “require” the “pooling” of sovereignty. This means that America will lead by following the conventional wisdom of transnational elites and that America’s interests will be served by entrusting them to entities beyond the American political system.

In *Time* magazine in 1992, Talbott anticipated a time when “nationhood as we know it will be obsolete [and]...all states will recognize a single, global authority.” In *The Great Experiment*, Talbott claims to have “qualified my forecast somewhat.” But his writings on this theme were not then and are not now simply descriptive (a “forecast”); they express an ardent wish for a transnational future in which the sovereignty of all democratic nation-states (including the United States) will be weakened and subordinated to global authority.

THE GREAT EXPERIMENT IS PARTLY A HISTORY of the “quest” for global governance and partly a memoir. The historical section is an interesting overview of an array of emperors, empires, and one-world idealists. Alexander the Great, Constantine, Mohammed, Ashoka, Genghis Khan, Dante, Kant, Marx, Einstein, Cord Meyer, and the World Federalists all pass in review. Talbott has clear favorites among them: empire over republic, transnationalists over defenders of national sovereignty. He declares that while Aristotle “believed in the city-state,” his student “Alexander had a bigger and better idea,” a “single global political community.” The modern democratic nation-state of Israel appears to Talbott problematic, while he describes the European Union in glowing terms (“a model for what is possible”). Some

things he just gets wrong. He describes America, for example, as a "multinational state." But however multi-ethnic America may be, we are not a land of different "nations" and "peoples," like the Austro-Hungarian empire or Canada or Belgium. As stated forthrightly in the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution, we are one people.

Talbott goes very wrong in his understanding of the relationship between the Enlightenment and America's founding. Like many on the Left and some on the center-Right (e.g., Robert Kagan), he describes a philosophically monolithic Enlightenment with the American Republic and the French Republic as its progeny. He acknowledges that these republics developed differently, but he views their "philosophical parentage" as the same. He fails to recognize the division within the Enlightenment from which the two revolutions and regimes derived their fundamentally different characters.

The French Revolution (like Marxism, as Lenin recognized) was a child of the utopian radical wing of the Enlightenment typified by Condorcet, who believed in a malleable human nature and the perfectibility of man, and promoted a historicist vision of the inevitable march of progress. John Adams directly challenged Condorcet's views in the late 1780s; the American Revolution and our entire constitutional order were heirs to the non-utopian Enlightenment (mostly Anglo-Scottish, but including continental moderates like Montesquieu). The very serious conflict within Western democracy today between the constitutional state and global governance is at one level a continuation of the argument within the Enlightenment between its moderate and utopian wings. Talbott does not understand this.

IN DEMOCRACY WITHOUT BORDERS? MARC Plattner highlights the inherent tensions between the transnational worldview promoted by Talbott (and influential Western elites), and democratic self-government itself. Plattner, a former student of Allan Bloom, is a vice-president of the National Endowment for Democracy (NED) and co-editor of its *Journal of Democracy*. Whereas Talbott posits global governance as the ultimate political good, Plattner champions liberal democracy and the democratic nation-state. To the title question, *Democracy Without Borders?* Plattner answers no: "We cannot enjoy liberal democracy outside the framework of the nation-state."

Plattner's book is an insightful reflection on liberalism, the democratic nation-state, and the European Union in relation to global democracy. Talbott talks of "shared" or "pooled" sovereignty without directly addressing the core problem of who is ultimately accountable to the citizens of a democracy. Plattner, by contrast,

argues that "If there is no clear locus or demarcation of sovereignty, it is hard to see how the people can be sovereign."

If Talbott interprets America's past and future in light of Immanuel Kant, Plattner looks to John Locke. Americans, Plattner tells us, have been historically (and still are) primarily Lockean, combining the particular and the universal along the lines found in Locke's *Second Treatise*. Thus for Lockean-Americans, while "all human beings are endowed with universal human rights," these rights are realized "only within particular commonwealths," whose governments are based on "popular consent and respect for individual rights."

This Lockean worldview directly affects American foreign policy. Talbott claims that the U.S., the foremost proponent of international cooperation in the past, has recently turned its back on multilateralism; Plattner argues that multilateralism itself has been "redefined." Americans support the old liberal internationalism embodied in the original U.N. Charter based on cooperation among sovereign nation-states. But many Americans object to the "new" multilateralism that seeks to "build institutions of 'global governance'" because these new institutions lack "democratic accountability." This American stance, Plattner maintains, is based on the Lockean principles of the Declaration of Independence: a "striking juxtaposition of an invocation of universal principles and an insistence on the right of a particular people to determine its own destiny."

Plattner is cautiously critical of the European project but is not a "Euroskeptic." The E.U., he tells us, has maintained a "studied ambiguity" on the direction of European integration. He allows that Europe is suffering from a "democratic deficit" and that decision-making in the E.U. is "unaccountable," and he worries that "if democracy were to unravel even in a single EU country," it would damage the cause of global democracy. But then he declares: "Fortunately, the European Union (even if it may indirectly be weakening to some extent the national democracies of its member states) offers a strong bulwark for resisting such a development."

At the end of the day, Plattner himself maintains a studied ambiguity towards the relationship between the E.U. style of global governance and liberal democracy. And that is the core problem with this fine book that is in many ways an intellectual tour de force. Plattner is reluctant to declare that the postmodern, post-national viewpoint he analyzes so well is also "post-democratic." He remains stuck within Francis Fukuyama's conceit that there are no serious rivals in principle to liberal democracy.

He points out, correctly, that the advocates of transnationalism do not directly challenge liberal democracy. But this is because they realize that

an indirect approach is more effective. When John Ruggie, a leading international relations expert at Harvard, describes concepts of national sovereignty and the nation-state (including democratic ones) as "morally questionable" (Plattner's words), he is challenging the moral legitimacy of the democratic regime—including by definition American constitutional democracy and the very idea of American self-government. Plattner does not make enough of this.

THOUGH HE PROVIDES A CLEAR ANTIDOTE to the writings of Strobe Talbott and other transnationalists, ultimately Plattner blinks. The global governance movement is the most serious challenge today to constitutional democracy and its only compatible home, the sovereign democratic nation-state. It is no less a challenge because it is Western, internal, "soft," and indirect, rather than Eastern, external, hard, and direct. Global governance in general and the European Union in particular represent a conscious ideological rival to American constitutional democracy, because the E.U. is both a post-democratic and a post-liberal project. Under E.U. rules, legislation begins in the European Commission (the bureaucracy), not the European Parliament, which has only limited authority. About 70% of Britain's laws today come from the European Commission, not from that "mother of parliaments" the British House of Commons—so much for representative democracy. Moreover, based on the U.N. Convention on Eliminating All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), the E.U. is promoting gender proportionality in parliamentary and local elections across Europe, recommending a certain percentage of seats reserved for women. This is not liberalism but classic corporatism, in which representation is based on the ascribed group to which one belongs. To make matters worse, E.U. institutions restrict free speech by outlawing "hate speech" in ways that would be inconceivable to Americans with our First Amendment guarantees.

This is not to suggest that we abandon Europe, but it is to argue that we support those forces in the E.U. who are seeking to repatriate sovereign powers back to the democratic nation-states. DeGaulle was right—and he was more of a genuine constitutional democrat than today's E.U.-crats—when decades ago he advocated a "Europe of Fatherlands." The present E.U. philosophical framework is, ultimately, incompatible with liberal democracy. It is time to stop engaging in politesse and say so openly.

John Fonte is a senior fellow at the Hudson Institute. His forthcoming *Sovereignty or Submission: Will Americans Rule Themselves or be Ruled by Others?* will be published by Encounter Books next year.

BOOKS IN BRIEF

Democracy Without Nations? The Fate of Self-Government in Europe, by Pierre Manent, translated by Paul Seaton.
ISI Books, 130 pages, \$20

Democracy Without Nations is the French political theorist Pierre Manent's most accessible reflection on the ongoing crisis of European democracy. He combines a political philosopher's insights with the reflective attachments of a patriot pained to see his country sleepwalking toward oblivion. This mixture of high-mindedness and quiet pathos informs every page of Manent's book, giving it a rare intellectual penetration and civic and moral seriousness.

The slim volume consists mainly of a fine translation of his *La raison des nations: Réflexions sur la démocratie en Europe*. This lucid philosophical essay generated a great deal of discussion upon its publication in France in spring 2006. Manent takes aim at contemporary Europeans' pretense of having replaced their nations' sovereignty and self-government with a "pure democracy" marked by "democratic governance which is very respectful of human rights but detached from any collective deliberation." In three complementary reflections on "Democracy," "The Nation," and "Religion," he details just what is entailed in this displacement of "political" democracy by "democratic governance." Most provocatively, he suggests that this new democratic "fundamentalism" is just as opposed to the realm of political deliberation as the various religious fundamentalisms that Europeans love to denounce. "There is no general rule, no universal rule of human rights" that can judiciously mediate between "the rights of man" and "the rights of God." The task of democratic statesmanship at its most wise and self-conscious is to weave together "communion" and "consent"—the precious patrimony of Western civilization and territorial self-government, on the one hand, with the equally important ideal of the "consent of the governed," on the other. Otherwise, democratic peoples are left impotent by blindly rejecting the "political instrument"—the nation—that allows them to exercise their sovereignty in the first place.

Manent is not satisfied with an abstract reflection on the "theological-political problem." He grapples in a most concrete way with the form that problem takes in the contemporary Islamic, Jewish, and Christian worlds. His account of political authority in the Islamic world (an "empire without an emperor"), as well as his rich and sympathetic account of Zi-

onism and the growing divide between a "depoliticizing" Europe and a democratic Israel, are particularly insightful. And if his earlier work on the history of liberalism emphasized the secular character of the liberal state as it was conceived by the modern political philosophers, this work insists that the liberal state and the Christian nation ultimately stand or fall together. In fact, I know of no more incisive dissection of the "hollow and vain" humanitarianism that substitutes for thought among European elites today.

—Daniel J. Mahoney
Assumption College

Embryo: A Defense of Human Life, by Robert P. George and Christopher Tollefsen.
Doubleday, 256 pages, \$23.95

In *Embryo: A Defense of Human Life*, Robert George and Christopher Tollefsen defend the moral and political status of the human embryo, arguing succinctly and persuasively that each embryo is "an individual member of the species *Homo sapiens*," and as such a human life to be protected from destructive research techniques.

The authors eschew completely any arguments in defense of the embryo that are based on religion, instead emphasizing the biological facts of human embryology as well as the principles of moral philosophy. The moral philosophy they follow is that of the "New Natural Law Theory" championed most famously today by John Finnis. The second half of the book is reserved for refuting arguments in favor of destructive embryo research, including some advanced by members of the President's Council on Bioethics, of which George is a member.

George and Tollefsen are able to carve up the positions of their opponents with skill and dispatch. One wonders, nevertheless, whether it is really necessary to insist upon the full humanity and personhood of embryos in order to establish that destructive research on them is morally misguided. In any case, in late November 2007 (apparently after *Embryo* went to press), researchers announced that they had developed a process for "reprogramming" adult human stem cells so that they possess, in effect, all the desirable properties of embryonic stem cells. This development would seem to put an end to the "stem cell wars"—and to constitute a complete vindication of President

Bush's stem cell policy. The main threat to the embryo is no longer stem cell researchers but the sloppy techniques of *in vitro* fertilization, which, at least in the United States, continue to produce great numbers of embryos that are simply discarded.

—Douglas Kries
Gonzaga University

American Poetry: The Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries, edited by David S. Shields.
Library of America, 952 pages, \$40

Clearly, poetry had a slow start in America. The Library of America's collections of 19th- and 20th-century poetry (published in 1993 and 2000) each fill two volumes, a reflection of the United States's surging literary energy after 1800. This new volume from an earlier, less familiar time nonetheless offers a rich trove of American culture: almost 300 poems by more than 100 writers spanning the years 1625 to 1800, with excellent author biographies and end notes. Some of the names will sound familiar: William Bradford, Anne Bradstreet, Michael Wigglesworth, Cotton Mather, Benjamin Franklin, Thomas Paine, Timothy Dwight, Philip Freneau, Joel Barlow, and Charles Brockden Brown. But David Shields has reached beyond the old canon to include several black poets, more women writers, at least five poets whose works survived only in manuscript and are here published for the first time, and a much wider variety of genres, subjects, and voices. As a result, edifying surprises can be found throughout: a gritty autobiographical poem from 1670s Virginia scribbled by a former convict struggling to survive as an indentured servant; an imaginary epistle from Anne Bol-eyn to Henry VIII, written in the 18th-century Pennsylvania wilderness by a Quaker frontierswoman; a fiercely patriotic Revolutionary War poem composed by an African American soldier, Lemuel Haynes; and a poetic anti-slavery plea, "The African Chief," penned by the Boston society woman Sarah Wentworth Morton. It is a wonderful collection of poetry—its aesthetic quality uneven, but its historical interest without limit.

—James G. Basker
Barnard College
Columbia University

WILL THE REAL LIBERAL PLEASE STAND UP?

The Age of Abundance: How Prosperity Transformed America's Politics and Culture,
by Brink Lindsey. Collins, 400 pages, \$26.95



IF LIBERALISM WERE A STOCK, ITS PRICE couldn't be lower. For decades "liberal" has been the most potent pejorative in politics. Not only conservative Republicans but also those of the center have pronounced the word with a sneer. Fox News wouldn't be Fox-y without liberals to attack. But it's really progressives and descendants of the New Dealers who have given liberalism a bad name. There is much in true liberalism, classical liberalism, to be valued, even by conservatives. This liberalism stands for free markets and free individuals and includes responsibilities along with rights. It is this liberalism that inspired Britain to repeal its Corn Laws and lead the world to freer trade. William Wilberforce gave his life to fighting and winning a liberal cause, halting the maritime slave trade. True liberalism, in Lincoln's words, is "the principle of 'Liberty to all'—the principle that clears the path for all—gives hope to all—and by consequence, enterprise and industry to all."

In a perceptive new history of postwar America, *The Age of Abundance: How Prosperity Transformed America's Politics and Culture*, Brink Lindsey aims to recover that good liberalism. Lindsey is vice president for research at the Cato Institute, a libertarian think tank. But he thinks that "liberal" is a better, broader word than "libertarian," the derivative stub of a philosophy to which so many have retreated. As he put it recently on his website, "I'm a libertarian because I'm a liberal." Ron Paul's presidential campaign has been successful by Libertarian

Party standards, but it has also reminded us of the limits of modern libertarianism. Lindsey, whose ideas the *New Republic* magazine describes as "libertarianism," has much to offer the American political conversation.

LINDSEY'S THESIS IS THAT WE GOT OUR POST-war prosperity through our old-fashioned liberalism—the pre-Franklin Roosevelt variety, which was still about the individual. But Roosevelt succeeded in appropriating the term "liberal" to make it mean almost the opposite—not about the individual but the group. Roosevelt's New Deal systematically cultivated and connected to various interest groups—senior citizens, labor, farmers, and others—rewarding them financially and politically with largesse that flowed from Washington. With the victory of the New Deal, the liberal label came to be owned lock, stock, and barrel by the Left and center that voted Democratic. When New York intellectual Lionel Trilling's collection of essays, *The Liberal Imagination*, appeared in 1950, the cognoscenti recognized it for what it was—a declaration of intellectual and political monopoly. Only non-conservatives were liberal, and only they had imagination. This September the book will be republished by NYRB [New York Review of Books] Classics, a sort of renewal of intellectual copyright.

Lindsey's gift is to remind us that though the word was lost, the spirit and the substance remained. In exquisite detail he portrays the des-

ert liberalism that grew strong in the Southwest even as New York marginalized itself as a town of Social Democrats and pragmatists. The Sunbelt's emergence was the expression of a desire to create a land where the individual ruled and the New Deal merely hung tiny on the horizon. As Lindsey reminds us, Barry Goldwater, "Mr. Conservative," had a broad liberal streak. His most famous utterance, that "extremism in the defense of liberty is no vice," was language worthy of Wilberforce.

What we remember of Goldwater is that Lyndon Johnson trounced him for that utterance. Liberals of the Roosevelt kind were scathing: "When in all our history," queried historian Richard Hofstadter, "has anyone with ideas so bizarre, so archaic, so self-confounding, so remote from the basic American consensus ever gotten so far?" But as Lindsey reveals, one reason Hofstadter and others were so vicious may have been that their own collectivist liberalism saw a threat in the individualist liberalism of Goldwater. And the appeal of Mr. Conservative's liberalism was stronger than the collectivists were willing to concede. In 1960, Lindsey notes, Richard Nixon received campaign contributions from 40,000–50,000 individual donors. JFK's donors numbered half that. Goldwater, in 1964, got some 650,000 individual gifts. This at a time when no modern campaign-finance laws required that gifts be small. As direct-mail expert Richard Viguerie has pointed out, an "estimated four million men and women took an

active part in the [Goldwater] campaign, contacting millions more.”

At the same time, the business world was feeling its own liberal oats. William Shockley, the head of Shockley Semiconductor in Mountain View, California, had won a Nobel Prize. A dictatorial boss, he was expected to have a lock on engineering talent. But in 1957, Robert Noyce, Gordon Moore, and colleagues escaped to form Fairchild Semiconductor. To mark its difference from Shockley, Fairchild created a liberal format—each of the eight founders owned an equal share of the company, and each received stock options. Noyce had the freedom to create the first silicon integrated circuit. Fairchild, of course, begat Intel, led by Andy Grove. Many authors have described this chain of events, but few have situated it politically as well as Lindsey.

LINDSEY SHINES LIGHT ON THE ENTIRE postwar period, but when he gets to the 1960s and 1970s his analysis is brightest. Conservative history has focused on how many of these Aquarians led the country astray. And Lindsey thoroughly covers that failure, including San Francisco’s Summer of Love in 1967. He cites a devastating contemporary description:

Pretty Little 16-year-old middle class chick comes to the Haight to see what it’s all about & gets picked up by a 17-year-old street dealer who spends all day shooting her full of speed again & again, then feeds her 3000 mikes and raffles off her temporarily unemployed body for the biggest Haight Street gang bang since the night before last. The politics & ethics of ecstasy. Rape is as common as bullshit on Haight Street.

The Summer of Love proved a summer of abuse, and worse. And meanwhile, black gangs partnered with agencies created with Great Society funds to trash the downtowns of cities such as Los Angeles, Detroit, Chicago, and Indianapolis. “‘We shall overcome’ gave way to ‘Burn, baby, burn,’” writes Lindsey. The Students for a Democratic Society held their last annual convention in June 1969. The radical era came to a formal end with Black Panther Eldridge Cleaver

in Algerian exile and “with...Timothy Leary and Charles Manson side by side in a cage”—Section 4-A of Folsom State Prison. The average family never went that far into the dark, but it still had to deal with the consequences of books like *The Courage to Divorce*, published in 1974, counseling “no reason is sound enough to keep a crummy relationship together.” In 1965, the total number of divorces was 480,000; within a decade it was a million.

As others have noted before Lindsey, strong counterforces were already at work to limit the damage. Even as the Summer of Love was taking shape in chemically-altered minds, a crowd of 18,000 came together in Tulsa, Oklahoma, to dedicate Oral Roberts University. Billy Graham gave the dedication address, titled “Why I Believe in Christian Education.” Though San Francisco’s moment was historic, today it can be argued that Tulsa’s had just as lasting an effect on American culture.

Lindsey, no curmudgeon, recognizes a good side to the Aquarian awakening: “At the center of its wide-ranging and varied enthusiasms was the urge to widen the horizons of American life.” Americans with widened horizons discovered, for example, sports: the number of tennis players tripled between 1970 and 1975; bicycle purchases rose.

IN BIOLOGY, SCIENTISTS SPEAK OF “ENCEPHALIZATION,” the growth of relative brain size of a species as it evolves. The labor market, Lindsey suggests, likewise encephalized liberally in the postwar years as ours became a service economy. Liberalism gave Bill Gates license to drop out and Steve Jobs license to experiment. As Jim Warren, who founded the West Coast Computer Faire, would note, the personal computer “had its genetic coding in the 1960s,” which was to say “antiestablishment, antiwar, pro-freedom, antidiscipline attitudes.”

Lindsey’s picture suggests it was no accident that the inventor of junk bonds was a product of Berkeley. Michael Milken moved from there to the Wharton School at the University of Pennsylvania, and from Wharton to inventing his new source of capital to fuel Silicon Valley inventions. Milken’s essential and very liberal insight was that greater risks for capital were

worth it—that liberal forgiveness might help the country grow faster. It’s true that Milken, like Leary and Manson, did time in prison, but his essential gift was no fraud. As of 2002, there were \$650 billion in outstanding junk bonds. Milken’s bonds powered the rise of both CNN and MCI. Such factors in turn gave the country Moore’s Law—that the number of transistors that can fit on a chip doubles every 18 months. They also led to the high productivity growth that carried the nation through the 1990s and all the way into the current decade, when granny glasses and V.W. Beetles have reappeared as part of the 1960s nostalgia boom.

As Lindsey points out, these new enterprises stood in stark contrast to smoke-belching, union-bound companies like Bethlehem Steel. There Roosevelt’s labor legacies yielded overpaid workers and overpaid bosses. Lyndon Johnson’s Great Society helped to produce a working class insensitive to the opportunity of innovation. One of those to pick up on all this was Ronald Reagan. He was no Aquarian, and he fought for law and order. But Reagan also understood the importance of growth, innovation, and individual liberty. And, of course, he could be as tough as Goldwater—or for that matter, Coolidge—with the unions.

Lindsey’s conclusion is that today “the broad center of American public opinion is a kind of implicit libertarian synthesis, one which reaffirms the core disciplines that underlie and sustain the modern lifestyle while making much greater allowances for variations within that lifestyle.” How wide those variations should be is eminently debatable, even among classical liberals, but his open optimism stands in contrast to the darkness that, say, Judge Robert Bork conjures in *Slouching Toward Gomorrah: Modern Liberalism and American Decline* (1996). In the 2008 election many conservatives know what they are against, but not necessarily what they are for. Lindsey provides the evidence for what many of us sense to be that mysterious next idea: liberalism, our liberalism. As he ably demonstrates, non-Democrats too are quite capable of Liberal Imagination.

Amity Shlaes is a syndicated columnist for Bloomberg and a senior fellow at the Council on Foreign Relations.

Book Review by James R. Stoner, Jr.

OUR ROBED RULERS

Political Foundations of Judicial Supremacy: The Presidency, the Supreme Court, and Constitutional Leadership in U.S. History,
by Keith E. Whittington. Princeton University Press, 320 pages, \$35



HAS THE SCIENCE OF POLITICS, SAID BY America's founders to have been greatly improved since antiquity, further improved since they wrote the Constitution? In an important new work, Keith Whittington puts this question to the test by examining the evolution of the judiciary's role in American government. The William Nelson Cromwell Professor of Politics at Princeton University, Whittington emerged dramatically into the scholarly world with two substantial books published simultaneously in 1999, *Constitutional Interpretation*, a defense of originalism, and *Constitutional Construction*, a study of how political actors outside the courts help formulate the Constitution's meaning. Taken together, the books presented an ingenious argument: originalism is the soundest method of constitutional interpretation by judges in legal cases because it respects popular ratification of the Constitution; but development and change are inevitable in situations of constitutional construction because these involve political struggles to complete, and inhabit, what the Constitution merely framed. Whether or not the distinction between interpretation and construction was understood in this way by the founders—"construction" in their time was often a noun form of "construe," a synonym for "interpret"—the distinction served usefully to balance continuity and change in Whittington's analysis. And both originalist constitutional interpretation and constructive constitutional development vindicate the sovereignty of the people, who on the one hand wrote the Constitution's text and on the other participate in the elaboration of constitutional practice and form.

Whittington's latest book develops the political science of his earlier works, but disappoints their political promise. In *Constitutional Interpretation*, Whittington wrote of "the faulty assumption of judicial supremacy," but now he has made his peace with the claim that, in the American system of government, judges are the final authority on the Constitution's interpretation. He holds elected politicians themselves responsible for not defending more vigorously the chief alternative to judicial supremacy, namely "departmentalism," according to which each branch of the government has final say over constitutional questions that arise within its purview. Departmentalism has a claim to be the original understanding; it was invented by Thomas Jefferson, employed by Andrew Jackson, and perfected by Abraham Lincoln. Judicial supremacy was first proposed in the speeches of their respective opponents: the Federalist Party, Daniel Webster, and Stephen Douglas. We are familiar with late 20th-century assertions by the Supreme Court that it owns "the authority to decide...constitutional cases and speak before all others for their constitutional ideals" (*Planned Parenthood v. Casey*, 1992), but in *Political Foundations of Judicial Supremacy* Whittington ably demonstrates that "even before the Supreme Court claimed that it was the ultimate interpreter of the Constitution, political leaders had already asserted the same thing."

WHAT THE AUTHOR TRIES TO SHOW—using his earlier conceptual framework almost against itself—is the constitutional construction of judicial supremacy, how the originally unsettled question of

authoritative constitutional interpretation was politically contested and eventually—allegedly—determined. In order to explain both sides of this contest—why so many politicians have endorsed judicial supremacy and why our greatest or most influential presidents have rejected it—Whittington adapts Yale political scientist Stephen Skowronek's framework of American political development from his influential 1993 book, *The Politics Presidents Make*. Whittington's focus on the presidency to explain judicial supremacy is surprising at first, but truly insightful, for it is only the president besides the Court who can actually speak for the American people as a whole.

Skowronek's framework is a sort of successor to the more familiar theory of critical elections and realignment, sketched by V.O. Key and elaborated by Walter Dean Burnham nearly half a century ago. While Key and Burnham stressed generational decision among the electorate, Skowronek focuses on presidential leadership and the succession of political "regimes" that results from transformative leaders. In Whittington's adaptation, presidents come in three types: reconstructive, affiliated, and preemptive. The first are the familiar greats—Jefferson, Jackson, Lincoln, and Franklin Roosevelt—who changed the terms of political debate, modified the structure of the state and its activities, and, yes, realigned the people's partisan identification. Affiliated presidents are members of the same political party who further elaborated or articulated the reconstructors' principles and policies, even at some distance in time, e.g., James Monroe for Jefferson, Theodore Roosevelt for Lincoln, and Lyndon Johnson for

FDR. Preemptive presidencies interrupt the reconstructive party's hold on the office without fundamentally challenging its positions, hence the Whig generals during the Jacksonian ascendancy, Grover Cleveland during the Republican era, and Dwight Eisenhower in the wake of the New Deal. All in all, it is an elegant model for observing patterns in American political history, reproducing for politics the pattern Thomas Kuhn devised in *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* (1962) to describe the history of science: stretches of normality operating within an established paradigm, punctuated by revolutionary moments when paradigms shift.

Whittington brightens the dark moments in Skowronek's model—for example, omitting the category of “disjunctive” presidencies, failed attempts at affiliation—as he refines it to explain the development of judicial supremacy. He erases Skowronek's doubts about categorizing Ronald Reagan as a reconstructive president and thus denotes the sequence from Reagan to George Bush to Bill Clinton to George W. Bush as reconstructive to affiliated to preemptive to affiliated—a typical pattern. He focuses the notion of political regime by emphasizing its constitutional dimension: reconstructive presidents establish their authority not by re-creating political meaning generally, but specifically by reorienting the Constitution's interpretation. With ample illustrations drawn from his knowledge of American political history, Whittington shows how affiliated and preemptive presidents both have found it in their interest to deflect constitutional questions to the courts, which, as yet another Yale political scientist, Robert Dahl, has demonstrated, soon enough come to mirror the thinking of the dominant electoral coalition or, in the new parlance, the dominant regime.

Affiliated presidents, finding the courts in friendly hands and working to make them friendlier, happily leave controversial issues to their judicial compatriots, allowing members of their coalitions to avoid blame for unpopular court decisions and even to take popular positions denouncing the courts without having to back an alternative policy with political consequences of its own. The incentives for preemptive presidents to support judicial supremacy are more complex. They are aware of their majority coalition's fragility, which usually does not give them control over both branches of Congress. When preemptive presidents lack the Senate, of course, they are constrained in whom they can appoint to the courts, and they themselves would probably not have been elected had they not conformed in their thinking to the constitutional orientation of their age (witness Cleveland, who supported hard money and *laissez-faire*, or Eisenhower, who accepted expansive federal power). In their weakness, preemptive presidents are not apt to promote legislation the courts will strike down anyway, and be-

cause, as Whittington points out, “the law is intertemporal and partially incongruent with the current regime...it may provide shelter from the prevailing political winds” to the president's advantage, especially by supporting him against a hostile Congress.

In short, only reconstructive presidents have an incentive to challenge judicial supremacy, whereas the others stand to gain by endorsing it. As reconstructive presidencies have grown even rarer in the 20th century than they were in the 19th, support for judicial supremacy has grown more common, making it now so clearly the dominant account of our constitutionalism that the Supreme Court itself is not ashamed to announce it. While Skowronek saw the eclipse of reconstruction as a kind of tragedy, Whittington's political lesson is to stop fretting and accept the inevitable. Besides, from Woodrow Wilson's appointment of Louis Brandeis through Richard Nixon's of William Rehnquist, preemptive presidents have learned to express their opposition to the dominant constitutional regime by finding justices able to dissent and thus lay the groundwork for doctrinal change, from within the Supreme Court, sometime in the future. Usefully, Whittington suggests that a president or a party inclined to defy the courts had better have the imagination and authority to be reconstructive. Departmentalism is not completely buried by his account, but it is reserved to the strong—and to those moments when a democratic people allows such strength.

BUT LET ME PROPOSE THREE WAYS IN which Whittington's acceptance of judicial supremacy seems premature. First, the book overlooks the distinctive function of courts in a common-law system, which even the U.S. Supreme Court does not escape—i.e., doing justice in particular cases according to law. To be sure, Whittington is aware that courts are different from other branches; he dismisses the work of the judicial behaviorists as mistakenly assuming judges are mere policymakers like all other government officials, and he staunchly holds that law persists across time. More attention is due to the fact that, even today, the courts' announcement of constitutional principles comes in particular cases known by the actual parties' names. Legislated changes in jurisdictional statutes—enabling class action suits, declaratory judgments, the combination of equity and law, appellate courts' control of their dockets, and other innovations—have made it easier to bring abstract questions to court, with concrete cases invented only as their vehicles. Still, the basic form of judging remains intact: courts are charged with settling particular disputes or righting particular wrongs, and they address general legal questions—including constitutional questions—only incidentally as needed to do justice. The finality of the Supreme

Court's judgment is precisely in the doctrine of *res judicata*, putting a particular case to rest. On the abstract questions, the judges cannot even bind themselves.

Second, the Skowronek-Whittington model of American political and constitutional history is attractive for being at once cyclical and linear, but as the punctuated heartbeats of reconstruction grow farther apart and less pronounced, one wonders whether the linear movement toward judicial supremacy might not cancel out the possibility of presidentially-led constitutional course-correction. Perhaps this is Whittington's point—but if so, then he needs to say more about the Progressive Movement's reliance on legal realism and public administration to transform what Skowronek elsewhere calls the old regime of courts and parties into the “new American state.” Both Cleveland and Eisenhower may have appointed chief justices that presided over eras of judicial activism in the spirit of the opposite party's dominant coalition—but can the Burger and even Rehnquist Courts' continued activism in a liberal direction on social issues be explained by the developmental model? Does federal dominance in the law since the New Deal—particularly in constitutional law as a result of the doctrine of incorporation of the Bill of Rights—change the balance of constitutionalism? Whittington addresses both these questions in useful ways, but in the end one has the sense that deeper and more questionable changes have taken place than his model is prepared to consider.

Finally, what are the consequences for constitutional democracy if the polity has finally accepted what in its earlier years had always been the minority or even oligarchic position favoring judicial supremacy in the Constitution's interpretation? Reconstructive presidencies remain a theoretical possibility in Whittington's account, but by definition they are unpredictable, depending as they do on leaders who “shatter” and “re-create” the political order. Leaving aside the question of whether conservatives would describe Lincoln's or Reagan's actions this way—instead of as a return to first principles or a restoration of natural rights—one wonders whether, seen from either side of the political spectrum, a great president still can challenge the Court in the name of the Constitution if ordinary citizens are not in the habit of seeing the law as their own, rather than as the distant decree of an authority in which they have no share or to which they have no access. And one wonders at a political science that understands the rhythms of political change but forgets what citizens need to know in the pursuit of the public good.

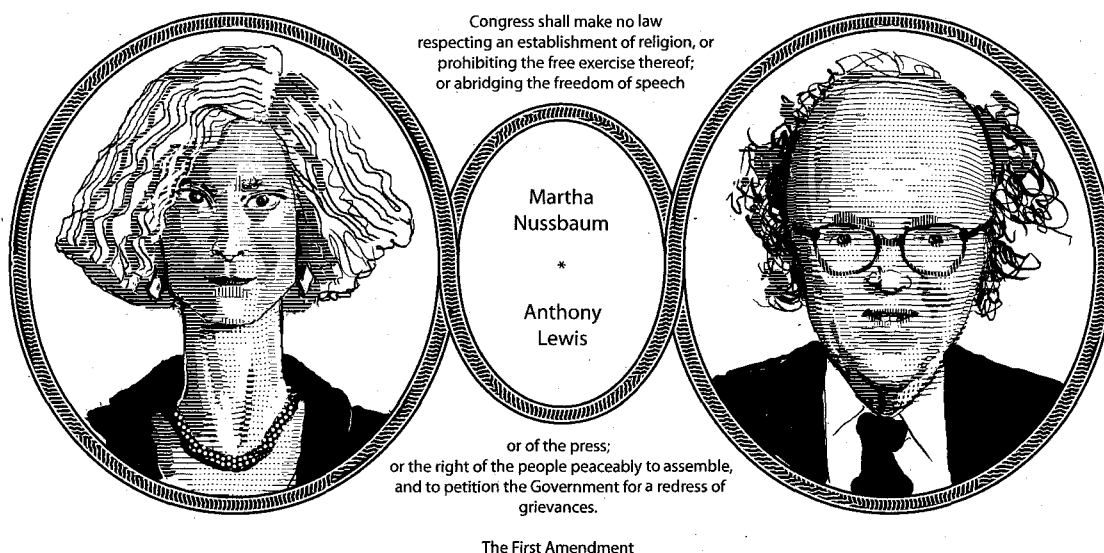
James R. Stoner, Jr., is professor of political science at Louisiana State University, and author of Common-Law Liberty: Rethinking American Constitutionalism (University Press of Kansas).

Book Review by George Thomas

FIRST THINGS

Freedom for the Thought That We Hate: A Biography of the First Amendment,
by Anthony Lewis. Basic Books, 240 pages, \$25

Liberty of Conscience: In Defense of America's Tradition of Religious Equality,
by Martha C. Nussbaum. Basic Books, 416 pages, \$28.95



THE FIRST AMENDMENT WAS NOT, OF course, “first” among the amendments put before the states in 1789 for ratification. It was the third of twelve, the first two of which went unratified. Tellingly, in James Madison’s initial proposal, the amendments would have been inserted amid the various clauses of the body of the Constitution, reflecting and reinforcing its central logic but not altering its substance. For Madison, the First Amendment did not protect anything that was not already protected by the Constitution: the injunction for Congress to “make no law” was a reminder of the limits of governmental power. And yet what became the First Amendment, insofar as it points us to the origins of modern constitutionalism, might properly be labeled “first.” Attempts to negotiate the “theological-political problem” are at the heart of modern constitutionalism and inform the American constitutional order. Central to negotiating this problem was to cast individual conscience—in a manner that implicated both speech and religion—as beyond the proper care of civil authority.

These two books, in different tones and shades, examine some of the central ideas that underlie the First Amendment. Let me initially note, without dwelling on it, that both books (particularly Anthony Lewis’s) engage in silly asides about “original meaning” that bespeak ignorance of the range of originalist thought, which runs far beyond the efforts of Judge Robert Bork. Indeed, Judge Bork’s version of origi-

nalism has much more in common with Lewis’s heroes—the famous duo of Justices Oliver Wendell Holmes and Louis Brandeis—than it does with James Madison.

Freedom for the Thought That We Hate takes its bearings from Holmes and Brandeis, who for Lewis capture the essence of the First Amendment—protecting the play of opinions that “we loathe and believe to be fraught with death”—as it has evolved in a purportedly progressive direction since the early 19th century. Lewis, a veteran *New York Times* op-ed writer (1969–2001) and occasional lecturer in law at Harvard and Columbia, insists that “their rhetoric was so powerful, so convincing, that it changed the attitude of the country and the Court.” Yet he doesn’t capture the whole of their thought. Lewis offers Brandeis’s concurring opinion in *Whitney v. California* (1927) as the most profound expression of the meaning of the First Amendment:

Those who won our independence believed that the final end of the State was to make men free to develop their faculties. They believed that freedom to think as you will and to speak as you think are means indispensable to the discovery and spread of political truth.... Recognizing the occasional tyrannies of governing majorities, they amended the Constitution so that free speech and assembly should be guaranteed.

I DO NOT DWELL ON THE ADMITTEDLY MINOR point that Madison did not offer the First Amendment to protect us from the potential tyranny of governing majorities: he thought the Constitution itself was a better defense against this than the parchment barriers that might be contained within a bill of rights. I want to emphasize the far deeper point that Brandeis’s concurring opinion was *hesitant* to protect us from the potential dangers of majority rule. Just prior to his elegant passage quoted above, Brandeis insisted that, “Despite arguments to the contrary which had seemed to me persuasive, it is settled that the due process clause of the 14th Amendment applies to matters of substantive law as well as to matters of procedure.” The logic of Brandeis’s famous defense of speech, then, was premised on his view that the Court should *not* be protecting any of these substantive rights. But if it was going to protect property rights—a term, by the way, never used by the justices who protected them—then we should also protect rights like freedom of speech. What happens, though, when the Court abandons constitutional limits in regard to “economic” issues as it did in the late 1930s under the sway of Brandeis and Holmes?

This basic question has vexed constitutional debate for much of the 20th century. Yet unlike most intellectual descendants of Holmes and Brandeis, Lewis is not the least bit perplexed by such matters. At first glance, this may not matter much. After all, one does not read Lewis to

puzzle out difficult constitutional questions. We read him for the narrative he weaves that brings to life the dramas and personalities that have represented and shaped our constitutional understandings of freedom of speech, including the sedition cases of World War I and Robert Paul Cohen's wearing "F--- the Draft" on the back of a jacket to name but two. And yet, as this book is meant to serve as an "engaging introduction" to those untutored in the fundamentals of constitutional law, it is profoundly incomplete and likely to miseducate. Consider Lewis's praise of Holmes's putative protection of liberty as a fundamental right in this cryptic dissent: "If in the long run the beliefs expressed in proletarian dictatorship are destined to be accepted by the dominant forces of the community, the only meaning of free speech is that they should be given their chance and have their way." This, as has long been noted, is a peculiar and shocking "defense" of free speech. For Holmes, if a tyrannical majority decides in the course of history to overthrow free speech, then that is that. Lewis offers some vivid portraits of First Amendment disputes, but his failure to attend more carefully to the intellectual ground on which the First Amendment stands means that this cannot be a true "biography" of the amendment.

NUSSBAUM'S *LIBERTY OF CONSCIENCE* wrestles more convincingly with such essential questions; it is a serious book and addresses serious matters in seeking to defend "America's tradition of religious equality" against current "dangers." Some of the "dangers" are frivolous, like Alan Keyes's inane statement that Jesus would not vote for Senator Barack Obama. Others are more troublesome: the Texas Republican Party's foolish affirmation in its platform that America is a "Christian Nation." And there are interesting omissions as well. Nussbaum, a professor of philosophy, divinity, and law at the University of Chicago, does not mention that Hillary Clinton believes that those who "see the divinity of every person" are more likely to "save some poor, at-risk child." Surely, in Nussbaum's terms, this belief would demean our equal concern and respect for the non-religious, or for those religions that do not believe in divinity. One might charitably skip portions of Nussbaum's overwrought introduction and turn to her argument about religious liberty, which considers a range of issues in a thoughtful manner.

Nussbaum's argument takes aim chiefly at Justice Antonin Scalia's opinion for the Court in *Oregon v. Smith* (1990), which held that a neutral law prohibiting the use of peyote—thereby incidentally prohibiting the religious practices of some Native Americans—was constitutionally legitimate. Against this understanding, and following the redoubtable federal Judge Michael

McConnell, Nussbaum insists that "free exercise" requires an accommodation for religious believers even against a neutral law that burdens their religious liberty. One wonders, however, why Nussbaum's main target is not Justice John Paul Stevens who, unlike Scalia, insists that the legislature may *not* grant religious accommodations lest it run up against the Establishment Clause. As Judge McConnell has noted, Justice Stevens takes "a strong position on establishment and a weak position on free exercise."

McConnell roots religious accommodation in the original meaning of the First Amendment, as he understands it. Nussbaum, while not rejecting this view, insists that religious liberty properly understood is grounded in an equal concern and respect for the individual. Her argument begins, perhaps surprisingly but often convincingly, with the dissenting Protestant thinker Roger Williams (1603-1683), who believed that the individual conscience must be free to see its way to God against both church and state. This led him to reject religious establishments—for a time, reportedly, he would only pray with his wife—and to insist that civil authority (the wilderness) should not intrude into the garden (the church). Yet as Nussbaum illustrates, Williams was not simply interested in protecting religion from the state, nor in giving us an early form of separation of church and state.

Instead, Nussbaum interprets Williams as anticipating the more famous argument of John Locke's *Letter Concerning Toleration* (1689) and running beyond it in crucial ways. While both men recognize the separate spheres of political and theological authority, Nussbaum places the emphasis on their notable differences: Locke rejects the idea of accommodating religious belief against a neutral civil law, whereas Nussbaum spins out Williams's logic in such manner as to compel religious accommodations. While Williams does not formally take up the issue, there is support for her interpretation in Williams's *Bloudy Tenet of Persecution for Cause of Conscience* (1644)—though Williams seems sometimes to command religious believers to follow civil laws if the scope of the law is truly civil. Still, there is a serious difference at the root of these arguments. Locke is most interested in toleration because it creates civil peace, whereas Williams prefers to see liberty of conscience as essential to religion. To be sure, Locke suggests that true religion must be based on liberty of conscience, but, in doing so, he places civil society first. Thus religious opinions contrary to "the moral rules" that are necessary to the "preservation of civil society" cannot be "tolerated by the magistrate." When religious conscience conflicts with the needs of civil society, it is religious conscience that must give way. Unlike Locke, Williams is driven by religion qua religion and his argument unfolds from that preoccupation. Not that he is

unconcerned with civil peace: the *Bloudy Tenet* is a dialogue (sort of) between Peace and Truth. But Peace is necessary insofar as it is the only means whereby an individual can truly come to God (Truth).

THIS ACCOUNT, NUSSBAUM ARGUES, BETTER captures the understanding of religious liberty present in the early state constitutions and ultimately in the First Amendment. For Nussbaum, Williams's influence is most evident in James Madison's famous petition for religious liberty in Virginia, the "Memorial and Remonstrance." "If 'all men are by nature equally free and independent,'" wrote Madison, then "all men are to be considered as entering into Society on equal conditions; as relinquishing no more, and therefore retaining no less, one than another, of their natural rights." Madison even goes so far as to say that an establishment of religion "degrades from the equal rank of Citizens all those whose opinions in Religion do not bend to those of the Legislative authority." Nussbaum seizes on this to insist that the Establishment Clause prevents direct aid to religious organizations even on a "nonpreferential" basis because it degrades the equal standing of some citizens. This may well be Madison's position—and perhaps it is the most tenable position—but that does not mean such an understanding captures the original, constitutional meaning of "establishment." Nussbaum is too quick to dismiss such objections and far too quick to cast Williams's and Madison's arguments as proto-Rawlsian.

Yet Nussbaum respects religious believers and offers an insightful discussion of religious liberty in the public square (including indirect aid to religious organizations). In fact, she is least persuasive when she attempts to minimize Madison's concern for tempering religion's own vices. This was not much of a preoccupation for Williams, but it was for Madison. Madison's natural rights argument implicitly tempers religion by limiting the reach and claims of revealed theology. Nussbaum does not take as seriously as she might the fact that some religions may have to alter themselves to fit within the contours of this settlement.

This is no doubt why we remain preoccupied by the theological-political problem. Constitutional government depends on liberty of conscience and also, though perhaps more quietly, on softening the religious fervor of a Roger Williams. Hence liberty of conscience points us to the origins of modern constitutional government and makes a just claim to be "first."

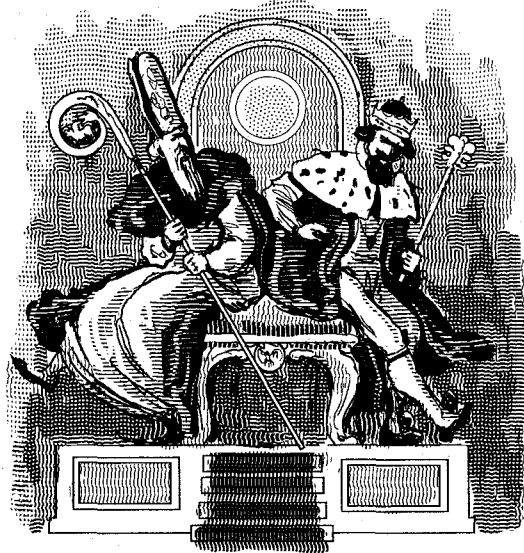
George Thomas is assistant professor of government at Claremont McKenna College and the author of *The Madisonian Constitution* (Johns Hopkins University Press).



Book Review by Thomas E. Schneider

CITY ON A HILL

Christianity and American Democracy, by Hugh Heclo.
Harvard University Press, 312 pages, \$25.95



IT REQUIRES A POWERFUL IMAGINATION FOR Americans today to conceive how large the theological-political problem once loomed in Western thought. What for early modern thinkers was *the* central problem in politics—the right ordering of one’s allegiances to God and to Caesar—seems to have diminished to a question of First Amendment jurisprudence. Hobbes devoted two of four parts of his *Leviathan* to theological matters, and Locke’s *First Treatise of Government* is also preoccupied with them. The scholarly neglect of these writings is a sign of Americans’ confidence that they have succeeded in laying the religious question to rest.

Americans were apparently the first people to arrive at a viable consensus concerning the proper role of biblical revelation in their public life. At just the moment in their history when such questions might have been most troublesome, they concurred in limiting the scope of churchly authority. But they did so in a manner arguably consistent with, even demanded by, the exalted status of revelation itself. Religious believers in America have been among the staunchest defenders of a principled separation between religion and politics. Devout Christians and secularists alike appear to view religion as a fundamentally private matter (though not necessarily for the same reasons). Let it be remembered that the constitutional “wall of separation” confines believers, too. To have persuaded believing Christians to limit their authority not in spite of but *because* of their faith, is no small achievement.

In his deeply engaging book, *Christianity and American Democracy*—delivered in outline form at Harvard University in 2006 as the second Alexis de Tocqueville Lecture on American Politics—Hugh Heclo, George Mason University’s Clarence J. Robinson Professor of Public Affairs, acknowledges the magnitude of this achievement, which he calls the “Great Denouement.” But he is not content merely to describe it, much less to congratulate Americans for it. The Great Denouement, like all putative forms of progress, has the defect of its virtues. Americans’ success in “reconciling Christian religion and civil authority” promotes forgetfulness of the very conditions that made religious liberty arguably choiceworthy in the first place. (The rise of radical Islam may aid in the recovery of an understanding of those conditions.) With forgetfulness comes a diminished ability to assess the new situation that liberty has created. Heclo’s book performs a valuable service in revealing that situation to us. While by no means blind to its advantages, Heclo concentrates on the problematical features of the Great Denouement. He does so for reasons that any thoughtful reader of Tocqueville will readily understand. The question, for Heclo as for Tocqueville, is less whether democracy can survive than whether it can be prevented from “running amok and degrading humanity.”

The accommodation that Christians in America had arrived at by the 1780s was one that their co-religionists elsewhere had long resisted. European Christians’ reservations on

this point cannot be dismissed lightly, admits Heclo—after all, “any religion is a comprehensive worldview which necessarily includes the political, social, and all the other dimensions of human life.” Tocqueville’s French contemporaries were quite sure that the spirit of religion and the spirit of liberty could not coexist. Tocqueville himself, of course, found Christianity flourishing in democratic America. But he also found that democracy had changed Christianity, and not always for the better. Tendencies that Tocqueville observed in the 1830s have developed much further in the meantime, and those tendencies appear to have accelerated since the 1960s. The course of American political development over the last century and a half makes Heclo wonder if Tocqueville’s compatriots didn’t have a point.

The liberal distinction between state and society has never been airtight. No one doubts that Americans’ Christianity has influenced and will continue to influence their democracy in profound ways. It can hardly fail to do so when an overwhelming majority of Americans identify themselves as Christians—approximately 85%, according to a study cited in the book. Less obviously but no less tellingly, American democracy has influenced Christianity in this country. The influence of democratic habits of thought on American Christianity means there is less to Americans’ self-professed Christianity than meets the eye. Heclo calls his readers’ attention to one sign of change: the fate of John Winthrop’s famous image (of which President Reagan made

memorable use) of America as a “city upon a hill.” That city was indeed to be an example to the world, but possibly a warning example. Winthrop reminded his listeners that “the eyes of all people are upon us. So that if we shall deal falsely with our God in this work...we shall be made a story and a by-word through the world.” What, then, does the American example reveal?

TO BEGIN AT THE ENDING, AS IT WERE: IT was James Madison's friend Thomas Jefferson who best expressed the terms by which faithful Christians could be good democrats. God himself, though “lord both of body and mind, yet chose not to propagate it by coercions on either.” Madison agreed, writing that only a Christianity that “disavows a dependence on the powers of the world” can be pleasing to Him. Madison's statement of the case for religious liberty in the “Memorial and Remonstrance” to the Virginia legislature implies that a reasonable persuasion is the proper vehicle by which Christians are to spread their faith: “the opinions of men, depending only on the evidence contemplated by their own minds, cannot follow the dictates of other men,” unless persuaded that those men are right.

In the course of time, however, American democracy has given rise to a Christianity that, in Heclo's words, is “more aligned with the desires of the people...as we would say today, ‘market driven.’” The effect of such theological populism has been to emphasize faith, understood in individualistic terms, at the expense of doctrine. But any attempt to define the meaning of Christianity apart from its doctrinal content is bound to fail. By seeking to de-emphasize doctrine, American Christians have only succeeded in changing its form. A religion that is “nonabsolutist, inclusive, modest and, above all, nonjudgmental” is clearly inconsistent with Christianity's traditional self-understanding. The effort to avoid intricate and contentious doctrinal issues has had a paradoxical result: the embrace of spiritual openness has resulted in a new kind of doctrinal rigidity. The new doctrine at once constitutes “a thoroughgoing claim of what is right and wrong to believe” and “disdains any need to give reasons to others” in support of that claim. It comes as no surprise, then, to learn that many of the same Americans who identify themselves as Christians also tell pollsters that all religions teach pretty much the same things.

The exaltation of individual choice above even fidelity to Christian doctrine has, in effect, imposed a new kind of orthodoxy, albeit one that fails to recognize itself as such. Christianity has given democracy, among other things, a view of the person as possessing a unique, God-given dignity. Not a generic human dignity—in the Christian view, each person is individually called

to discipleship and will be individually judged. But in the course of American history the idea of judgment, even self-judgment, has largely receded from sight. The new quasi-orthodoxy has no such foundation; “in modern America the exercise of individual autonomy of conscience is *ipso facto* sanctified, whatever it chooses,” Heclo argues. Christians in Tocqueville's France knew they had a “democracy problem.” Traditional Christians in modern America who don't know that about themselves might discover it by listening to their opponents—who see “a potential danger to democracy” in virtually every appeal to or defense of traditional doctrine.

This is not Heclo's view any more than it was Tocqueville's. Still, it is a view that needs to be taken seriously—not only because many Americans hold it, but more importantly because it points toward an apparent defect in the original accommodation. It is tempting to conclude that Americans' judgmental nonjudgmentalism constitutes an unraveling of the founders' Great Denouement. Instead, Heclo suggests that the religious state of affairs in modern America may be seen as its fulfillment, though in a perverse way: “Protestantism in a democratic regime of consumer sovereignty has ultimately reaped what it sowed in the Great Denouement.” If this is so, it must call into question the appropriateness of the term *denouement*. Indeed, “American political development...has reopened the hoary issue of the compatibility of democracy and Christianity.” The resolution of this story remains hidden from mortal eyes.

THE VOLUME INCLUDES RESPONSES TO Heclo from three distinguished commentators—Mary Jo Bane (Harvard), Michael Kazin (Georgetown), and Alan Wolfe (Boston College)—along with a final rejoinder. The responses serve mainly to highlight the advantages of Heclo's Tocquevillean approach, which is sensitive to the questions that animate religious believers themselves. This approach helps to minimize the disadvantage of writing about religion from the outside; still, it is a disadvantage that cannot be completely avoided. The outsider's viewpoint is what accounts for such language as the following: “In the ongoing struggles to define their national identity, Americans fitted a political reading of the democratic faith into the millennial framework supplied by certain Protestant versions of the Christian faith.” One doubts that the Protestants holding to these versions of the Christian faith would recognize themselves in Heclo's description. But passages like this one give a misleading impression of the book as a whole.

Heclo has set out the framework of the issue between democracy and Christianity, even if he disclaims any credit for having reopened

it. Secular-minded democrats are not wrong in seeing a “Christian problem.” For Christians, the voice of the people cannot supply the last word on fundamental moral questions. That has always been true. But as developments in psychopharmacology, bioengineering, and “reproductive technology” engage the attention of democratic legislators, it will be increasingly difficult to consign questions of human life to the private sphere. They involve, ultimately, the prospect of turning “humanity itself into another man-made thing.” Especially at this time, all Americans should welcome the perspective of traditional Christians, and of Jewish and Muslim believers as well. Fears that the American polity will succumb to theocracy are exaggerated; the greater danger, as Heclo persuasively argues, is that American Christians' own “democracy problem” will induce them to leave the public square to their opponents.

Thomas E. Schneider is author of *Lincoln's Defense of Politics: The Public Man and His Opponents in the Crisis over Slavery* (University of Missouri Press).

Attention CRB Subscribers

Each issue of the *Claremont Review of Books*, as soon as it is published, is available to you in its entirety online. Or, if you like, you can download the complete issue (including Elliott Banfield's artwork) as a PDF.

This feature is exclusively for subscribers. Simply go to www.claremont.org/crbfullaccess and create a My Claremont account. You can also customize your account to stay on top of the Claremont Institute programs, events, and publications that interest you most.

Another reason to subscribe to America's premier conservative book review.

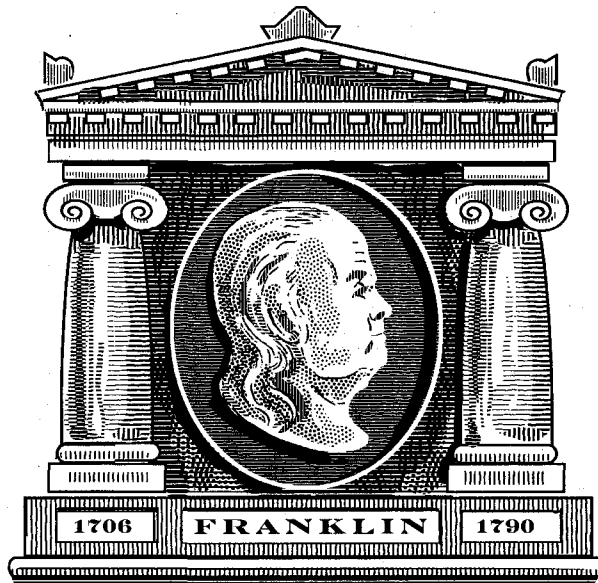
A BRIGHT AND ACTIVE BOY

The Political Philosophy of Benjamin Franklin, by Lorraine Smith Pangle.
Johns Hopkins University Press, 277 pages, \$45 (cloth), \$20.95 (paper)

IN *THE POLITICAL PHILOSOPHY OF BENJAMIN Franklin*, Lorraine Pangle presents such a learned, wise, and well-written account of her subject's thought (it really covers, necessarily, more than just his political ideas) that her book easily stands out among the recent spate of Franklin studies. She lucidly explains his key insights and ably compares these with "the great project of modern, rationalist political theory that stretches back to Hobbes, Bacon, and Spinoza," which she believes "attained its fulfillment in the American founding."

For Pangle, an associate professor of government at the University of Texas at Austin, Franklin's philosophy can best be understood by answering the question "what forms the mind of the bright and active boy?" that he described so well in his famous autobiography. His ethics came from the precepts his father taught him about leading a good, honest, and useful life, and from the powerfully prescriptive Puritan culture of early 18th century Boston. Sixteen-year-old Franklin used his earliest persona, "Silence Dogood" (mocking Cotton Mather, author of *Essays to do Good*), to set forth political ideas he would espouse for the rest of his life: freedom of expression, religious hypocrisy's harmful social effects, and the argument, as Pangle puts it, that "the impulse to be helpful cannot be wholly explained by self-interest, for man is a social being with a natural capacity for empathy."

The book explains the development of Franklin's thought as a product of his active life. He moved in a pattern timelessly expressed in the central proposition of Confucian political thinking (of which Franklin himself was probably aware): "If there is righteousness in the heart, there will be beauty in the character; if there is beauty in the character, there will be harmony in the home; if there is harmony in the home, there will be order in the nation; if there is order in the nation, there will be peace in the world." As good character and habits led to his harmony-building civic career in Philadelphia, Franklin developed what Pangle terms "the heart of his political vision," namely "a view of democratic citizenship, a rich and subtle understanding of the habits and qualities of the heart and mind that need to be fostered in or-



der to sustain liberty and...support the way of life best suited to human happiness altogether." She finds that Franklin "almost instinctively...grasped" the point later expressed by Tocqueville: for a democratic polity to work well it is necessary to "multiply infinitely the occasions for citizens to act together and to make them feel every day that they depend on one another."

IN SUPERB SECTIONS ON THE ALBANY PLAN OF Union, the struggles to secure self-government for Pennsylvania from British authorities, the Declaration of Independence, and the framing of the Constitution, Pangle shows how Franklin moved naturally and effectively from harmonious civic action to seeking order (frames of government) in the state and nation, working ultimately for peace in the world. She concedes that Franklin was not much of a systematic or innovative political philosopher, faulting him for seeming "shallow and untheoretical" compared to Socrates and Plato. Nor did he avoid contradictions in his thought; but he was well-grounded in basic democratic principles (though he remained ambivalent about natural rights), had a keen sense of the needs of the ordinary people among whom he lived, and possessed a skill and cleverness of expression that make him one of the supreme political communicators of all time.

Pangle confronts Franklin's many critics who have had little patience for the down-to-earth, pragmatic nature of his thought. She admits

that Franklin "extols hard work and the accumulation of money," but contrary to Max Weber, for whom Franklin was the "prime example of the capitalist outlook," Pangle finds that he did not believe in making money as an end in itself. Rather, he agreed with

the early modern political philosophers [that] the unleashing of acquisitive energies is a praiseworthy project because it contributes to the common good of society, generating employment, enhancing security, multiplying pleasures, and drawing energies away from deadly religious quarrels and military adventurism into more constructive channels.

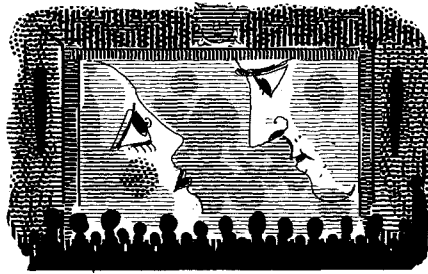
He showed how Thomas Jefferson's model of democratic citizenship grounded in pastoral life could be extended to city life where the same civic values of thrift, honesty, and hard work could be cultivated. Franklin served as his own best example, retiring from business at age 42 to devote the rest of his life to the study and practice of science, and to politics at the local, state, national, and international levels. His insights into the harmonious relation between citizenship and middle-class virtue is evident in Pangle's sensible accounts of his views on immigration, race, and slavery.

Altogether, then, she gives us a Franklin who stands with the best thinkers and actors of the founding era, a man who fashioned an understanding of self-government, a concept of democratic citizenship, and a humane worldview that have served the country well in the more than two centuries since his death. Of course, the book's most winning feature may be its frequent quotations from Franklin's own cogent, witty writing. Even the author acknowledges that "for making this book such an enjoyable one to research I can only thank Ben himself." But for giving readers one of the very finest introductions to this remarkable American's thought, we must thank Lorraine Pangle.

Ralph Ketcham is professor of history emeritus at The Maxwell School at Syracuse University, and the editor of The Political Thought of Benjamin Franklin (Bobbs-Merrill).

SHADOW PLAY

by Martha Bayles



A Monument to Adams

Mausoleums, statues, monuments will never be erected to me.... Panegyric romances will never be written, nor flattering orations spoken, to transmit me to posterity in brilliant colors.

—John Adams to Benjamin Rush
March 23, 1809

JOHN ADAMS, DAVID MCCULLOUGH'S LOOSELY woven, colorful biography of the second president, was published to great acclaim in 2001 and remains one of the best-selling books ever written about the American Revolution. Those same qualities of airiness and color were recently transferred to the small screen in HBO's seven-part miniseries by the same title, now available on DVD. When I say "airiness and color," I mean it as a compliment. To achieve a fresh, vivid representation of that extraordinary period is no mean feat, and both McCullough and HBO deserve credit for pulling it off.

The moving spirit behind *John Adams* was Tom Hanks, whose heavily annotated copy of McCullough's book was, according to screenwriter and co-producer Kirk Ellis, the "bible" for much of the production. But not for all. Filmmakers need images as well as words, and while the written record of the American Revolution is a gold mine, the same cannot be said of the visual one. Photography did not exist, and the artists of the time had little talent or inclination to go beyond neoclassical set pieces or polemical cartoons. And after the Revolution, when living memories began to fade, national pride demanded the creation of official representations, most of which now strike the eye as quaint, tendentious, and sanitized. Yet they are icons, and it's risky to trifle with icons. So unless one reads avidly and has a vivid imagination, one's mental movie of the American Revolution is apt to be, in McCullough's phrase, "a costume pageant."

Pushing the Refresh Button

THE POVERTY OF USABLE IMAGES correlates with a poverty of good feature films about the Revolution. The Internet Movie Data Base lists only 88 about the period (most of them documentaries), as compared to 413 about the Civil War. In recent years, the two most respectable treatments I can think of, *Jefferson in Paris* (1995) and *Amazing Grace* (2006), focus almost entirely on slavery—and on the years after 1776. About the pre-revolutionary struggle, the one that would ultimately judge slavery to be an abomination,

John Adams,
directed by Tom Hooper.
Screenplay by Kirk Ellis.
HBO Films.

the pickings recall Benjamin Franklin's choice for the national bird. Adams won that argument, and we got the eagle. But cinematically speaking, Franklin won: most feature films about the Revolution and the founding are turkeys.

At one end of the scale is Disney's *Johnny Tremain* (1957), adapted from the 1943 children's book by Esther Forbes. The book is too earnest and middlebrow to come off as propaganda, but the same cannot be said of the film. Heavy-handed to start with, it was even more so in the televised version, which was accompanied by clips of Uncle Walt lecturing the masses on freedom. These lectures, which can be seen on the DVD, reach a low point when Walt strolls through a costume storage room, introducing

a half-dozen tired-looking mannequins as "the great freedom fighters of history" (the dude in the suit of armor is Charlemagne). As for the film itself, it's an overproduced Technicolor postcard watchable only by viewers sunk in nostalgia for *Davy Crockett*, *King of the Wild Frontier*.

At the other end of the scale are more recent films that shake off quaintness only to plunge into witless violence. *Revolution* (1985), a forgotten Al Pacino vehicle, purports to show the gritty reality of the Northern Campaign. Unfortunately, this bold departure is accompanied by extreme timidity regarding the causes of the conflict. *Revolution* flopped at the box office and was so trounced by the critics that it nearly ended Pacino's movie career. More successful is Mel Gibson's *The Patriot* (2000), which despite some wonderful moments insists on making the hero a Rambo-like figure haunted by memories of butchery in the Indian wars, who revels a bit too much in butchering British soldiers who revel in butchering Americans. Produced for \$110 million and earning \$215 million worldwide, *The Patriot* paints America's birth with little white or blue, mostly dripping red.

Television has done better, with three exceptional programs: *The Adams Chronicles* (1976), a slightly stilted but comprehensive PBS program tracing John's family unto the fourth generation; *George Washington* (1984), a fine CBS miniseries starring Barry Bostwick; and *The Crossing* (2000), an outstanding A&E movie based on the eponymous novel by Howard Fast. *The Crossing* is about George Washington's fateful decision, after the defeats and retreats of late 1776, to cross back over the ice-filled Delaware River and ambush the Hessian garrison at Trenton. And while it contains some mid-size historical inaccuracies, these are more than compensated for by the superb performances, especially Jeff Daniels as Washington.

John Adams surpasses all of these. It is not free of period clichés, especially when David Morse appears as Washington (or rather as an animated waxwork of Washington). And this Bostonian was not fooled by Williamsburg and the Virginia countryside posing as Boston and Massachusetts (also Philadelphia and Trenton, New Jersey). But while there is no lack of picturesque beauty in *John Adams*, there are also some suitably gruesome moments: a brutal tarring and feathering, a corpse barnacled with smallpox, a shipboard amputation, a mastectomy performed without anaesthetic. Overall, this production does something difficult and wonderful: it strives to be as historically accurate as possible, then pushes the “refresh” button to make the old appear new.

The Spirit of '76

WE SEE THIS ESPECIALLY IN THE THIRD episode, in which Adams (Paul Giamatti) and his son John Quincy brave the fierce wintry Atlantic in order to join Franklin’s diplomatic mission to enlist the aid of King Louis XVI of France in the War of Independence. When the Adamses arrive, the scene is not welcoming: the powdered French nobility are charming but condescending, and Franklin (Tom Wilkinson) spends most of his time swanning about the court in a fashion impossible for Adams to approve or emulate. Not only that, but, to Adams’s dismay, Franklin has already struck a deal, making the whole arduous journey for naught. Yet despite these notes of gloom (or perhaps because of them), the episode is pure magic. By some alchemy of acting, direction, music, and location (these and other European scenes were shot in Hungary), the viewer actually feels the *frisson*, the shiver of awe, that France must have inspired in this man who had read everything but never been farther away from home than Philadelphia.

This episode is also when Paul Giamatti comes into his own. In the first two, he seems miscast, straining to twist his funny, rubbery face into Adams’s hawk-like severity and ending up looking...well, funny and rubbery. Over time, though, he wins the battle and becomes one with his challenging subject. This is less a physical transformation than a psychological one: are we watching an actor’s anxiety at struggling to fill the shoes of a great historic figure? Or are we watching that figure’s own distress at always feeling one down, the odd man out in a contest where the prizes always seem to go to taller, more worldly and confident men? After a while, it doesn’t matter. Call it method acting. It works.

Much has been made of McCullough’s rescue of John Adams from obscurity. But curiously, Adams is the main character in 1776, the Tony

award-winning Broadway show that ran from 1969 to 1972 and then was made into a film. In 1997, the show had a successful run as a revival on Broadway. Despite songs (tuneless) and jokes (wan), 1776 is not really a musical comedy. It’s a fairly serious play about the deliberations of the Second Continental Congress leading up to the signing of the Declaration of Independence. But in deference to its own historical moment, perhaps, it swaddles its gravity in awkward levity. Still, the hero is not Franklin (Howard da Silva) or Jefferson (Ken Howard) but Adams (William Daniels). And allowing for drastic differences in tone, he’s roughly the same youthful Adams seen in the early episodes of the HBO miniseries.

It may seem puzzling that 1776 was a hit, given that it appeared just when the 1960s counterculture was turning sour. One reason, I would guess, is its treatment of John’s relationship with Abigail. Among the many issues boiling at that time, one of the hottest was “women’s liberation,” as it was then called. Laura Linney, who plays Abigail in *John Adams*, told an interviewer that when she was growing up, “the iconic film about the American Revolution” was 1776. This makes sense: not surprisingly for a film created during the sexual (as opposed to the American) revolution, 1776 depicts a randy Franklin flirting with the ladies and a hunky Jefferson “burning” for Martha (Blythe Danner). But it also depicts a faithful Adams not just longing for Abigail (Virginia Vestoff) but also respecting and consulting her as an equal. This was a terrific crowd-pleaser back then, and to judge by *John Adams*, it still is.

Every female character in *John Adams* is well drawn, but the number one scene-stealer is Linney as Abigail. Like Giamatti’s, Linney’s performance ripens with time, reaching a peak of perfection in the latter episodes, when with a single wordless glance she can convey the subtlest possible emotion, and more amazing, the finest degree of judgment. Not for a moment do we doubt that this woman is as engaged with the weighty questions of the day as she is with household cares, and able to dignify both in letters that will stand among the most eloquent documents of the age.

Scratching the Surface

BUT WHAT OF THOSE WEIGHTY QUESTIONS? Herein lies the chief disappointment of *John Adams*: without apology, it skips the entire Constitutional Convention and ensuing debate between Federalists and Anti-Federalists. To those innocent of American history, it might even appear that writing the U.S. Constitution was a breeze, because our hero Adams did all the heavy lifting when he drafted the Massachusetts constitution back in 1779, and

the people of Massachusetts ratified it in 1780.

To be sure, neither Adams nor Thomas Jefferson participated in the Constitutional Convention, both being overseas during the summer of 1787. According to Ellis, “none of us were interested in making an illustrated history lesson,” so “we settled on a structure in which every scene is witnessed directly by Adams or Abigail.” This was clearly the right decision, although the filmmakers violated it to some degree when they plopped Adams down amid the Boston Massacre and the Battle of Lexington and Concord, neither of which he in fact witnessed. This might be excused as artistic license, but as it happens, these scenes are among the least artistic in the miniseries. Indeed, they smack a little of the old CBS-TV show, *You Are There*, with Giamatti standing in for Walter Cronkite.

Clearly, it would have been egregious to make Adams and Jefferson two flies on the wall at the Constitutional Convention. But no such distortion is necessary, because in spite of their absence from the deliberations, the two men spent months, indeed years, debating such key constitutional questions as the proper size of a republic, the nature of representation, the prospects for instilling civic virtue through education, the dangers of faction and commerce (and their advantages), the trouble with religious establishments. Need I point out that none of these lacks relevance today? And that their relevance hardly stops at the water’s edge?

To be fair, *John Adams* does not ignore these questions. They pop up frequently, in dialogues skillfully adapted from the letters and other writings of the principals, and while few of these dialogues do more than scratch the surface, most are eloquent and dramatically effective. In part this is because, next to Linney, the biggest scene-stealer is Stephen Dillane, about whom it might be said that he plays Thomas Jefferson better than Thomas Jefferson played himself. Many of Jefferson’s contradictory qualities—aristocratic manners and democratic sentiments, reverie and acuity, romanticism and rationalism—are delicately suspended in Dillane’s enigmatic screen presence. And the contrast with Giamatti’s abrasive, dogged Adams could not be more deftly drawn or more delightful to watch.

All the more reason, then, to wish that these exchanges could have lasted longer and taken on more substance. Indeed, our historically challenged viewer might understandably think that the main bone of contention between Adams and Jefferson was France. We see them sparring over Parisian mores and manners, disagreeing sharply over the French Revolution, and finally, the XYZ Affair and the advisability of war. Not surprisingly, given our own times, President John Adams’s persistence in an undeclared “quasi-war” with France and his decision to make

peace rather than escalate that war is roundly vindicated, even though, having alienated both the peace party and the war party, he lost the 1800 election to his estranged vice president.

Holding Their Tongues

IS JOHN ADAMS SKEWED TOWARD THE polarized politics of 2008? Maybe a little, but no harm done. The antiwar message is subtle, and so is the treatment of another timely topic: race. For example, in the first episode, when Adams is defending the British soldiers who shot into the crowd at the Boston Massacre, one of the key witnesses is a black man who dares to testify that the soldiers were not ordered to shoot by their officer but rather tricked into it by the crowd. At first, I assumed this scene was concocted to score some anachronistic political point. But I was wrong. There is no evidence that Adams addressed the man as "Mr." (being black, he was called simply "Andrew") or that his testimony was decisive. The scene is a stretch, aimed at making Adams look less like "the King's man" and more like a revolutionary (which at the time he was not). But the man did exist; indeed, he testified more than once.

John Adams makes clear the Adams position on slavery: Abigail calls it a "sin" and wonders if God has sent the smallpox as a punishment; John states unequivocally that he does not own slaves on principle. The contrast with Jefferson is drawn via two brief references to Sally Hemings, the servant who is said to have become his mistress after Martha's death. I say "servant" because Sally and her four siblings were not referred to as "slaves," having been born out of wedlock to Martha's father, John Wayles, and a slave named Betty, herself the daughter of a captured African woman and an English sea captain called Hemings. Rather than ignore this tangled history, *John Adams* sums it up with a poignant contrast: a vicious newspaper attack on Jefferson and his "blackamoor," read aloud at the Adams breakfast table; and a scene in which Sally weeps beside Jefferson's deathbed.

Is it a good thing that, throughout its several hours, *John Adams* contains not a single interpolated speech about the humanity of blacks, the inhumanity of whites, or the terrible price to be paid if the thorn of slavery is allowed to fester in Liberty's flesh? Yes, because while it is stupid to wish the thorn away, it is smart to understand that most Americans, certainly those who comprise the likely audience for *John Adams*, have heard all those speeches before. Indeed, some of the younger members of that audience might be forgiven for thinking that American history

consists wholly of such speeches. And like it or not, exhortation too often repeated loses its power. When we've heard it all before, we can't hear it anymore.

What we *can* hear, and what *John Adams* puts to admirable use, is silence. In particular, the grim silence that surrounds the arrival of the newly elected President Adams and his wife at the ugly and depressing construction site in "Washington City" that will someday be the White House. It's winter, cold and rainy, and the half-finished edifice looms over a torn-up landscape animated only by black slaves toiling miserably away with nothing to look forward to but a night huddled under an open tarp. Beyond a necessary syllable or two, John and Abigail do not speak to the slaves. Neither do they speak directly about them when alone in their cavernous new home. This is not because they are indifferent or complacent, it is because, at that moment, all the power invested in the presidency, about which John Adams has written and argued for years, feels useless. When witnessing a catastrophe too somber for words, intelligent people hold their tongue.

The Role of Religion

CONSIDERING HOW MANY TOPICS *John Adams* tackles well, I wish it had tackled religion. Adams and his peers were intensely preoccupied, not only with their own beliefs and doubts, but also with the role of religion in public life—preoccupations that, needless to say, are shared by millions of people in America, as well as by billions of others around the globe. It is also the case that the religious views of the founders are hotly contested, with some touting them as orthodox Christians, others exposing them as closet atheists, and still others dispatching them as deists. I don't blame Ellis and company for not wanting to stir up that hornets' nest. But there is one aspect to the story that could have been included, to great effect.

Dumb to start with, the current shouting match over the founders' religious views gets dumber when all parties assume that the more devout a colonial American was, the more he favored the establishment of religion. This is manifestly not true. As Steven Waldman argues in his valuable new book, *Founding Faith*, "separation of church and state would not exist if not for the efforts of eighteenth-century evangelicals." Waldman focuses on James Madison, son of a Virginia tobacco planter and member of the Church of England, then the legally established religion of the colony. In his youth, Madison witnessed the harassment, imprison-

ment, and violent abuse of his Baptist neighbors for the crime of not being Anglican.

This "diabolical, hell-conceived principle of persecution" left a deep impression on Madison, and later, during the drafting of the Virginia and U.S. constitutions, he strongly opposed religious establishment, not because he wished to enfeeble faith but because he wished to fortify it. "During almost fifteen centuries the legal establishment of Christianity has been on trial," he wrote in a 1785 memorandum to the Virginia House of Delegates. "What have been its fruits? More or less in all places, pride and indolence in the Clergy, ignorance and servility in the laity, in both, superstition, bigotry, and persecution."

Such arguments appealed not just to Baptists and other evangelicals but also to free-thinkers like Jefferson, who famously remarked (in defense of "the rights of conscience") that "it does me no injury for my neighbor to say there are twenty gods, or no god." Here is where *John Adams* could have tackled the topic, because one of the richest and most vexed arguments between Adams and Jefferson was not about France, it was about the problem of republican virtue. As a young man Adams jettisoned the Calvinism with which he was raised, and became a Unitarian—although almost certainly not meaning, as social scientist Edward Banfield used to say, that he believed in "one god at most." Adams opposed religious establishments, and yet, Massachusetts being Massachusetts, he lived with one in practice. Unlike the sanguine Jefferson, Adams worried about the consequences of banishing faith altogether from the public square.

John Adams places these sentiments into Adams's mouth from time to time, including during a heated argument with Jefferson over the French Revolution. But it does not place them into a sufficient context for viewers to grasp their salience to the American Revolution—or to the struggle for freedom of conscience more generally.

I do not wish to end on a carping note, however. To its enduring credit, HBO has given us a popular version of our history that, rather than priming the pump of our self-esteem, reminds us of the sacrifices, temptations, and uncertainties that always shadow self-government. In the chastening words of Abigail Adams's good friend, and sometime political enemy, Mercy Otis Warren, here speaking in a manner that John Adams himself would have approved: "From the general equality of fortune which had formerly reigned among them it may be modestly asserted, that most of the inhabitants of America were too proud for monarchy, too poor for nobility, and it is to be feared, too selfish and avaricious for a virtuous republic."

PARTHIAN SHOT

by Mark Helprin



Make the Sudan an Offer It Can't Refuse

BEFORE THE FULL EXTENT OF GENOCIDE COMES TO LIGHT, LITTLE CHANCE exists that a nation in a position to intervene will do so, especially if what is happening is peripheral to its national interests and/or it is engaged in a protracted struggle elsewhere. Genocide is usually beyond the reach of practical intervention because it may be sheltered or accomplished by a military near-peer, or—as in Cambodia 30 years ago or the Congo now—because of the dispersal of individual atrocities over vast and inaccessible terrain. Even when relatively easy, intervention is rare.

Despite almost a million and a half bombing sorties flown against Germany during the Second World War, many of which targeted road and rail, the United States and Britain failed for lack of trying to destroy the system of transport that fed the gas chambers and crematoria. Thirty-five years later, America failed despite its unquestioned naval supremacy to protect the Vietnamese Boat People. That we and our two allies capable of projecting power, France and Britain, are now distracted and divided by the wars in the Middle East, is unfortunate for Darfur.

The genocide there is thus an unattended stepchild left to well-meaning philanthropies and governments that further sap the possibility of decisive action by proposing delicate measures of relief and equally fragile diplomacy. Blankets are necessary, but they will not stop the razing of villages. Even should China be embarrassed, it might not be sufficiently so to protest roughly to the Sudan, which on account of China's embarrassment is not guaranteed to terminate its air raids or its support of the Janjaweed.

As the Sudan brazenly defies, if not the world's will, then, its wishes, and the death toll closes upon half a million, the pity is that the people of Darfur can in fact be saved. In concert with our allies or entirely alone, we have the military potential to accomplish this at little or no cost to anyone except the Sudanese government, which itself would pay only in the currency of unrealized aggrandizement.

The multinational troops in Darfur have neither the training nor the organization nor the mobility adequately to defend the population. Seventy-eight countries, each with its own problems, procedures, and rules of engagement, are represented in what is less a rescue mission than a camping trip to the Tower of Babel. A possibly influential force is developing in Chad, where the E.U., soon to be supplemented by Russian helicopters, will deploy weakly to defend a line drawn across largely empty desert. But, for the sake of those who face slaughter on the other side, why not cross that line? Nations hesitate to violate sovereignty because doing so is a matter of immense consequence and gravity. Then again, so is genocide.

Darfur is physically distant from the Sudan's heartland and sources of military power. Every inch of the 600 miles of barren territory between Khartoum and the killing grounds is an opportunity for a reprieve commanded by American air power—with not a boot on the ground. The Sudanese military in Darfur can be trapped without sustenance, to wither or retreat as reinforcements are kept out. And the Janjaweed can be denied support by severing the few extenuated routes of supply.

The first requirement of a cordon sanitaire, however, would be to cut all air links, which would require carrier air strikes to destroy the Suda-

nese air force's 51 combat aircraft, 25 transports, and 44 helicopters; its fuel, munitions, and maintenance facilities; and the few runways capable of supporting heavy transports and fighters. Were Chad to approve a small expeditionary force of U.S. A-10s, which it probably would, just a few of these could closely suppress remnant Sudanese armor and check any force of the Janjaweed sufficiently concentrated to overcome local means of self-defense.

MOREOVER, NONE OF THIS WOULD PROVE NECESSARY WERE THE United States willing to go further yet and threaten or accomplish the destruction of the Sudanese regime's means of power over a country pulled apart centrifugally by multiple secessions. One needn't be squeamish about such a proposition. It pertains to a government that has long massacred hundreds of thousands of its "own" people in its South and West, supported international terrorism, and menaced most of its neighbors. The precise targeting of a substantial portion of its 1,200 armored vehicles and 1,100 artillery pieces, its telecom exchanges, microwave towers, uplinks and downlinks, its dozen small naval vessels, its aircraft, runways, munitions, military headquarters, logistical stores, security ministries, and presidential residences would be only a few days' work for long-range bombers dispatched from remote bases, and the planes of two carrier task forces hastened to the Red Sea.

Which would the regime in the Sudan prefer? To be annihilated, or to discontinue its campaign of mass murder? Taking into account the air defenses, distances, and the ranges, numbers, and capacities of our (and perhaps French and British) aircraft, this is a choice to which the Sudan can be brought. Given its record, few nations would come to its aid with other than a pro forma whimper, and given the geography and the air and naval balance, no nation could. Though repressive dictatorships might protest, and China determine to hurry the formation of the blue-water navy it is already building, little else would change except for the better.

This is especially so because only in the worst case would a military strike actually be necessary. One of the chief attractions of such an initiative is that, if properly directed, it could, one way or another, military strike or not, accomplish its aims. They are, first, to stop the mass killings and displacements; and, second, to pressure the Sudan into negotiating settlements in good faith, which it need not do as long as it retains its habitual option of simply murdering the populations it finds troublesome.

The threat itself would likely be enough. If not, then to carry it out in the present circumstances would be honorable, right, and overdue. For these are human lives that in Darfur are senselessly extinguished. There is no soul anywhere more valuable than any of theirs, no child more worth saving than any of theirs. We are able to do so, as we can stand our carriers and pilots at the ready. And why would we not? A whole people, no matter how wretched or obscure, must certainly be worth three-days' ammunition.

An earlier version of this essay appeared in the New York Times.

save the date

THE CLAREMONT INSTITUTE'S
21ST ANNUAL CHURCHILL DINNER

FEATURING HONORED SPEAKER
AMBASSADOR JOHN BOLTON

NOVEMBER 1, 2008
THE ISLAND HOTEL
NEWPORT BEACH, CA



“Levy and Mellor, in this excellent examination of twelve far-reaching Supreme Court cases, force readers to question the direction in which the judiciary has led our country over the past century.,,”

— *Publishers Weekly*

“A passionate, thoughtful, provocative, and eminently readable book.,,”

— Eugene Volokh, Professor of Law, UCLA; founder, *Volokh Conspiracy* blog

The Dirty Dozen is an unprecedented analysis of cases that changed the course of American history. Coauthors Robert Levy of the Cato Institute and William Mellor of the Institute for Justice reveal the ongoing impact these cases have on free speech, economic liberty, property rights, private contracts, and much more.

\$25.95. Published by Sentinel, an imprint of Penguin Group USA. Available at Amazon.com, in bookstores nationwide, and at 800.767.1241.

THE DIRTY DOZEN

How Twelve Supreme Court Cases
Radically Expanded Government
and Eroded Freedom

Robert A. Levy & William Mellor

Foreword by Richard A. Epstein

The CLAREMONT REVIEW OF BOOKS is a publication of the CLAREMONT INSTITUTE
FOR THE STUDY OF STATESMANSHIP AND POLITICAL PHILOSOPHY.

In this Issue

With intelligent direction and undeflectable resolve, we can have a stable peace in the Pacific and elsewhere. In their absence, we shall suffer either slow and ignominious defeat without war, or war with a tortuous unfolding and an uncertain end, and, of course, millions of broken hearts—like the war we are fighting now, because we did not heed these lessons in time. And yet what candidate is alert to this? Who will speak of such things in time, and who will dare to awaken them?

Mark Helprin
"Rich Country, Strong Arms"

CLAREMONT
REVIEW OF BOOKS
937 W. FOOTHILL BLVD.
SUITE E
CLAREMONT, CA.
91711

NON PROFIT ORG.
U.S. POSTAGE PAID
PERMIT No. 504
CLAREMONT, CA

F-4 PS *****AUTO**SCH 3-DIGIT 940
2358 ACSUS83
MR. RON UNZ
WALL STREET ANALYTICS INC.
555 BRYANT ST # 371
PALO ALTO CA 94301-1704